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**Evangelical Visitor - July, 1998 Vol. 111. No. 7**

Glen A. Pierce

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evangelical

# VISITOR

July 1998



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**Experiencing  
miracle after  
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# Special People

## Harold and Betty Albrecht

They live within five miles of where they were born. Both accepted Jesus when they were young and still attend the church where they grew up. They were high school sweethearts and have now been married for 27 years. They have three children, one married and two who will be married in the summer of 1998. He has a dental practice and she is a homemaker and does office work for her husband's business. When you recite just the facts it sounds quite hum-drum and ordinary, but this couple is anything but ordinary.

Harold and Betty Albrecht are known and respected by many in the Brethren in Christ Church and throughout their community. This is partly due to the fact that Harold has been involved with Brethren in Christ World Missions for almost ten years, and has served on the General Conference Board. He has served as a local school board trustee and as Chairman of the Waterloo County School Board. Both he and Betty have been involved in their local parent/school councils. Betty is the secretary for the Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church and gives many hours of her week to seeing that everything is kept in perfect order. Again, these are only the facts. It is the involvement in these and other church and community activities that has allowed people to truly see Jesus in the lives of these two individuals.

At first glance, Harold and Betty appear to have led a charmed life. Good job, nice home, great kids, and a wonderful marriage. On closer observation though, you will see that this is first and foremost due to the grace and mercy of God. They would be the first to point that out.

There is something more, however. Both of these individuals, from a very young age, turned every aspect of their lives over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In every decision, whether business or personal, they have sought the Lord and his counsel. That sometimes meant doing things differently than others around them. They did this, not to gain distinction or reward, but simply because Jesus commanded it and because they love him.

Over the years, I have personally experienced and watched

as Harold and Betty have demonstrated the love of Jesus. I have marveled at their integrity and passion for the spreading of the Gospel. Everything that they do—from helping out in a financial need to being there when a friend phones in distress late at night—is done because they know they are ambassadors for Jesus. They truly understand that they are the mouth and hands and arms and feet of him. Betty's most common response upon hearing of a need is "What can we do to help?" I have watched as Harold has befriended someone in the hopes of bringing him or her to the Lord! The most amazing thing is that he ends up loving that person and wanting to be a friend whether he or she comes to know the Lord or not. Of course, because he wants the best for those he loves, he never stops praying and working to bring about their salvation.

It is remarkable to see how magnetic this behaviour is. People are drawn to this couple and their family, and they want to be like them. They want the personal relationship with Christ that they see modeled. They want to experience the same love and dedication that they see in this marriage. They want the peace that they see coming from the lives of these two people.

This is when Harold and Betty shine their best. This is where discipling comes in. This is their chance to teach and mentor. This is when they demonstrate that they are only small mirrors, but that they reflect the love and peace of our great God. They point the way to Jesus. After all, isn't that what spreading the Good News is all about?



*This article was written by Lynn Cober, Wellesley, Ont.*

### SPECIAL NOTE:

Articles about "Special People" in their teens, 20s, 30s, and 40s are invited.

"Special People" profiles a wide variety of Brethren in Christ members of all ages and from all walks of life. You are invited to submit a short article about some "Special Person" you would like to introduce to Visitor readers. Articles should be typewritten, preferably 300-400 words, and must have the approval of the person being profiled. If your article is accepted for publication, we will contact you to secure a photo for publication (which will be returned). Mail your article to *Evangelical Visitor*, P.O. Box 166, Nappanee, IN 46550.



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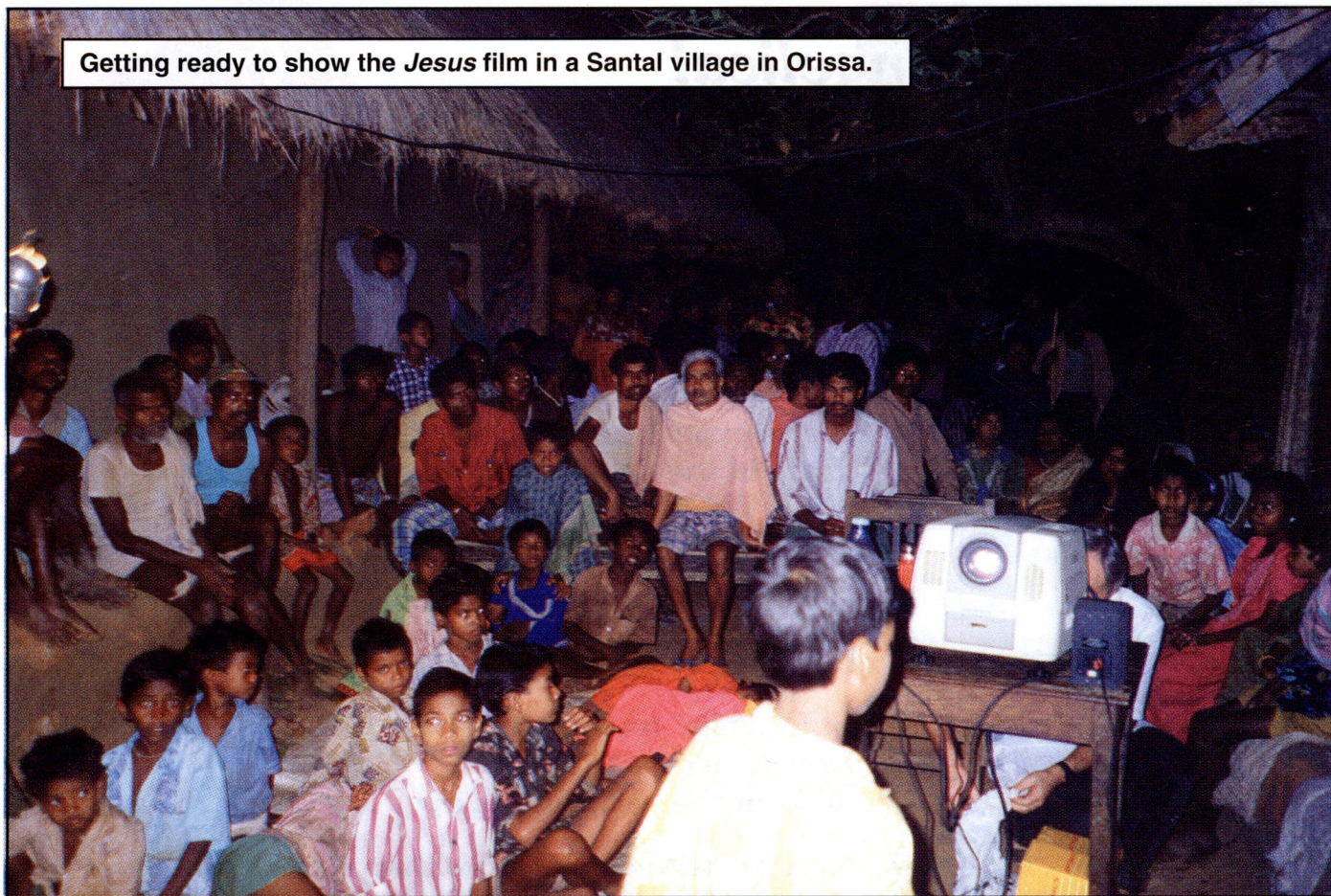
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Getting ready to show the *Jesus* film in a Santal village in Orissa.



While we  
were  
crossing a  
park in  
downtown  
Delhi,  
God spoke  
to my soul.

**T**WELVE YEARS AGO this past March, Karen and I, along with our boys ended our time of missionary service (church planting in Japan). Shortly afterwards, we made a contract with God. If he would help us develop a successful business, after our boys grew up we would use the proceeds from that business to attack the problem of the unreached peoples of the world.

God has been faithful, our boys both shave (sometimes), so the time has come for us to fulfill our role in the contract. In January 1996, we made our first feeble move entering into the 10/40 window, touring India with Dana and Judy Crider.

We had a wonderful time. We met Mother Teresa in Calcutta, saw the place of my childhood dreams—the Taj Mahal, and spent a week on the beaches of the Arabian Sea. However, there was one moment that probably has changed our lives forever. While crossing a park in downtown Delhi we came upon a large group of people surrounding a tiny television. They were watching a cricket match (a sporting event,

not two bugs fighting). In a moment, God spoke to my soul. If in downtown Delhi, the capitol, people will flock to see an electronic box, just think what they will do in the villages if you show the *Jesus* film. (I had previously had one experience with the *Jesus* film in 1984 when it premiered in Japan.)

It was not until September of 1997 that we began to put the nuts and bolts of this ministry together. I'm not sure where we had been for the past 20 years, since the *Jesus* film had built quite a world-wide legacy. But we did not have one bit of information, nor did our friends, I might add. We thought Campus Crusade had a stake in the film, so I called the operator to get their toll-free number. That commenced what has since been the overwhelming revelation of God's tender mercy on us, as we have experienced miracle after miracle (to the yet-to-be-convinced: coincidence after coincidence).

In a very short order, God went to work showing us everything we should purchase. We chose the video format, which to date



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# We've experienced miracle after miracle as we share in the *Jesus* film ministry

by Dan Dehyle

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has proven to be cheaper, more efficient, and needing very little care. We have a choice of videos in over 500 languages of the world and they cost us only about \$22 a piece. Thus far we have shown the film in four of those languages.

**I**n January of this year, Karen and I left for India again, with the film equipment, meeting the Criders on their winter break in Goa, near the west coast beach. We placed ourselves away from the beach in a guest house so we could participate in Goan village life. We had brought with us the *Jesus* film in the language of the Goan people, Konkani. Through the introduction of Mr. Caitano, the owner of our guest house, we soon showed the film for the first time to 150 people. None of these people were believers. Through this showing, an additional eight showings to over 2,000 people developed. All heard a credible, reliable rendering of the Gospel of Luke, followed by a 15-minute invitation to follow Jesus.

After returning home from Goa, in March I found myself heading back to India, not with my wife, but with Rick Heisey, an old college friend. This time we were going to Woodstock School in the Himalayas and then on to Orissa State. Three showings in the Hindi language were put together by the Criders. In Orissa we were to show the film six times to the tribals in the Oriya language. These programs were scheduled by our accompanying Brethren in Christ Indian evangelists, Dr. Bijoy Roul, Pramod Roul, Ashis Parida, and Bharat Behera.

Once again, most—for the first time ever—were being taught who Jesus is. Since everyone has been asking, and I'm sure you would if you could, what have

been the results? I will quote Dr. Bijoy Roul, when I asked him this very same question.

He said, "Four things happened. First, many of the Christians who saw the film are illiterate or lack a Bible, so this was wonderful teaching for them. Second, in many of these villages, only one or two families are Christian. Many have suffered persecution due to ignorance of family members, neighbors, and the R.S.S. Now, the whole village has seen who Jesus is. It will make a difference. Third, the film will bring tremendous encouragement to the missionaries stationed in those areas and the incidences of persecution should be diminished. Finally, over the next months through follow-up, it should be discovered that many are ready to follow Jesus, resulting in even more baptisms."

I like his answer. We have witnessed tears, a fainting, audible prayers during the invitation, smiles of joy, and continuous requests to show the film. We have planted close to 4,000 seeds in the hearts of the unreached. I feel thus far we have been faithful. The ministry has widened to include preaching, literature, and strategizing other ways to reach the yet unreached. In June, plans call for me to be going to Zimbabwe and Zambia, accompanied by Wendell Zercher from my home church, Harrisburg Brethren in Christ, Harrisburg, Pa. Then later in September I will return to India (with only God knows who), to do ministry in Bihar, Nepal, maybe Bangladesh, and West Bengal with an Orissa ministry team.

In closing, my advise to anyone considering such a lifestyle is this: seek to find where God is already at work, shower that ministry with prayer, and then just join him. You will be in for an amazing journey.

We made a contract with God. If he would help us develop a business, we would use the proceeds to attack the problem of the unreached peoples of the world.



# The **gospel** to Muslims

## via **debate**

*Two Muslim students shook Jay's hand and congratulated him, as did two English students who stated that they were not Christians, but wanted to thank him.*

Jay Smith flew to Arizona for the funeral of his brother-in-law, Randy Lutz, the day following his May 15 debate with Shabir in Leicester, London. Jay's response as to how the debate went is: "Personally, I felt it went quite well...However, rather than give you a personal account of the debate,...let me share what Mark Pickering had to say the day after the debate." Mark Pickering, a friend of Jay's who is studying medicine in London, discusses and debates with Muslims alongside Jay at Speaker's Corner almost every week.

**T**he turnout at the debate with Shabir was excellent. Around 400 packed in, many having to crowd around the doorways and aisles because there was no more room in the theater itself. A huge proportion were Christians. It's difficult to say which group was larger, but it was a great improvement on Birmingham in February, where we were outnumbered five to one.

Shabir tried very hard to get the order of the debate changed, but Jay held on, and in the

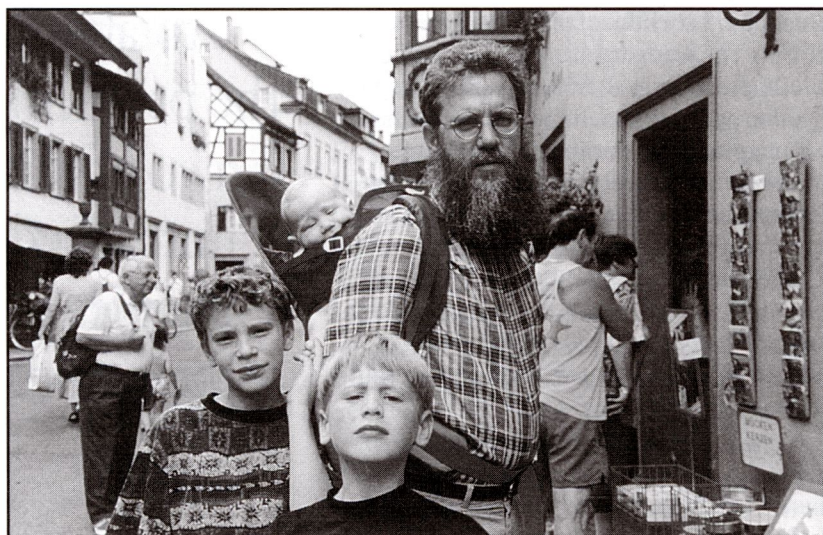
end, Shabir agreed to go first. His talk was largely concerned with the views of Christian scholars about the Bible, taking a very liberal view. He put across the idea of a huge discrepancy between all the New Testament manuscripts, mentioning false authorship for some books (e.g. 2 Peter) and pointing to lots of redaction, alteration, and embellishment in the gospels. His main authority for this was Bruce Metzger. This seemed strange to those of us who had read Metzger, and the opinions quoted seemed slightly unfamiliar. It was not until near the end that it became clear, when Shabir quoted from Metzger himself, that he was simply quoting Metzger's reporting of other scholars' opinions. Jay is going to check with Metzger's books and the videotape of the debate, but it seems likely that Shabir was twisting Metzger's words to suit his own agenda. If this is true, it will need to be exposed to the Muslim news-groups, as this sort of deception must be stopped.

Jay's first speech began with a resume of the great impact of the Bible on the world, e.g. translations, changed lives, and non-Christian countries using Biblical principles. I thought it unfortunate that Shabir's talk had focused so much on undermining the reliability of the Bible, so that when Jay spoke, many may well have thought, "So what, your Bible is corrupt, so what does it matter?"

The rest of Jay's speech covered the Qur'anic authority for the Bible and a comparison of the historical evidence for both books. Needless to say, the Qur'an came off somewhat worse.

Shabir, in his rebuttal, tended to refer back to Metzger *et al* (his version). As in Birmingham, he avoided the historical material, although he made some good points on other issues, drawing attention to harsh Old Testament laws, for instance.

In Jay's rebuttal, he underlined Shabir's reluctance to deal with the historical material and then proceeded to relate the story of Shabir's *101 Contradictions* booklet from the Birmingham debate. He then duly produced the rebuttal booklet, *101 CLEARED UP Contradictions in the Bible*,



Jay and his three sons in Switzerland.



which I don't think Shabir was expecting. (This booklet is now on the debate site <http://debate.org.uk/topics/apolog/contrads.htm>, and can be downloaded for your perusal and use with Muslims in your own vicinity).

It was heartening to see Shabir forced to rely so much on his Metzger material while avoiding the historical debate. It was, of course, a great advantage this time for Jay to know who he was debating, as he was much better prepared for Shabir's material.

After the debate, some of the Muslim students approached Shabir and questioned him on why he had avoided the historical material. It was obvious that they needed answers as well, which Shabir was not providing. Two Muslim students shook Jay's hand and congratulated him, as did two English students who stated that they were not Christians, but wanted to thank him.

Many good talks were had afterwards by the Operation Mobilization volunteers who had driven from London and the Christian Union students from Leicester. A good number of Leicester students are booked to come on the training weekend run by Jay and Elsie Maxwell. They have a great job to do on campus and need our prayers.

This report is undoubtedly one-sided, but I do think that we can genuinely rejoice. Thanks to all who prayed and pray for more, lasting fruit from the encounter.

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*Note: The debate was filmed by Nick Hall, and will be available for purchase in both the PAL and NTSC format. If you would like a copy, simply e-mail Nick at: [nick@domini.org](mailto:nick@domini.org).*

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***The following was received from Jay Smith on June 3 as an update to the above article.***

Since Mark's account was written, we have had further responses about the debate in Leicester. There were over 600 people at the debate, and not the 400 we had initially thought. Evidently, many could not get into the lecture theater (which held 350), forcing some to sit in the aisles, while others crowded around the exit doorways; but unknown to us, another 150-200 or so saw the debate in another room by closed circuit TV.

Among those who came were about 50 secular students who have since been talking about the debate on campus, mentioning that they felt the Christian position was far more credible, especially the manuscript authority for our Scripture. This is similar to the reaction we received at the Middlesbrough debate in 1996, which is encouraging, as I do not necessarily target the secular students when I prepare my material.

Another encouraging outcome has been the reaction of the Christian students on campus. Practically the entire Christian Union showed up for the debate, many anxious as to whether it

should have been carried out at all. They feared there would be an adverse reaction from the more militant Muslim society who are supported by the large Muslim community within Leicester. A number were expecting a riot, and were pleasantly surprised to find that this not only did not happen, but that many of the Muslim students were quite open to discuss what had happened at the debate in the days following it.

Since that time, between 20-30 Christian students have been meeting every morning at 6:30 a.m. to pray for the Muslims on campus. The Christian Union president is particularly excited about these times of prayer, as this is the first time he has found such a spirit of urgency and solidarity in the Christian Union.

There were also a few skeptical mission leaders who came along wanting to see for themselves whether this form of ministry was viable or not. I had a talk with two of them afterwards, and they have made a 180 degree turn in opinion concerning debates. They realize that there is no other format which we have at our disposal for bringing in so many intellectual Muslims from such diverse backgrounds. There was hardly a "peep" from anyone in the crowd for

over three hours. What a time to present the gospel of our Savior substantiated

by a credible foundation, the Bible, while simultaneously eradicating the authority for the Qur'an, in a forum initiated by the Muslims themselves.

Because a debate is so large and public, it can be a catharsis in not only bringing otherwise disparate parties together, but in helping Christian students come together for a common purpose, as we are now seeing at Leicester. It was unfortunate that I was not able to stay on for a day of seminars the next day, because of my flight back to Arizona. They have asked, however, that I come up at the beginning of term in September to help them move on from the debate. This is the model we have wanted all along, and seems to be finally coming together. It is an answer to prayer, but one which will hopefully spur other Christians here in Britain to take on a similar task with Muslims in their own communities. Let's see where it leads us.

—Jay Smith

***There were also a few skeptical mission leaders who came along wanting to see for themselves whether this form of ministry was viable... they have made a 180 degree turn in opinion concerning debates. They realize we have no other format for bringing in so many intellectual Muslims from such diverse backgrounds.***



## A first-time visit to some remote Brethren in Christ Churches in Nicaragua



**Crossing the Rio San Juan, with a boatman who is 86 years old.**

**Below, German Garcia leads a seminar at the Buena Vista church.**

**O**UR JOURNEY took us southeast of Managua, near the border of Costa Rica, to San Carlos, on the southeast edge of the huge Lake Nicaragua. From here, you can see the Rio San Juan flowing along Nicaragua's southern border to the Caribbean Sea. Several years ago, some Brethren in Christ people from further north moved into that area, looking for work and better farmland. There are now five Brethren in Christ church plantings in that area. We went to San Carlos to help celebrate the third anniversary of the founding of the church in Buena Vista.

Buena Vista is a little frontier-like settlement with a school, health center, and electricity for three hours each evening by generator. At this time of the year, the backyard wells are dry and people walk for about an hour to carry drinking water from the river. We took hammocks along for sleeping, but the pastor's wife insisted we sleep in their bed, built of strong, wide planks and covered with a thin blanket and a sheet. This bed reminded us of Isaiah 28:20. The rest of the space in the small room contained a single bed where the pastor, his wife, and four-year-old child slept while we were there.

When Marshall taught classes in Juigalpa last year, he learned to know the pastor, Agustin Montoya. Two regional church leaders, who had helped start the Brethren in



Christ work in the area, plus a team of six musicians joined us from Zelaya, in the eastern part of Nicaragua, with their accordion and a variety of guitars—which they carried with them nearly every place they went. During our three days there, we enjoyed staying in the background while those capable leaders directed the seminars and

preached in the evenings. Of course, we were ready to participate when they asked one of us to pray for the sick or respond to a question or situation. It was a good time to be with those church leaders as well as to learn to know the congregation, made up of people who live in the town or walk or ride horses an hour or two to get to church.



by Eleanor Poe

# visit to "Good View" (Buena Vista)

The children were friendly and hung around us. Some wanted to sit with us in church. One night, a 12-year-old girl in one of those fancy, satiny kind of party dresses sat very close to me, occasionally putting her fingers and hands in my hair. White hair is very unusual to them. Then she took my hands and said, "You don't do any work!" Indeed, hers were much rougher than mine. Later at El Castillo, the pastor's ten-year-old daughter acted similarly, always nearby, holding my hand while walking and touching my hair when she had a chance. It seemed she could not comprehend that something like I existed!

Because we did not want to drink much of the questionable water, we walked up the only street in Buena Vista to look for juices or sodas. Since it is such a long way from anywhere, there was very little soda available, but we found a store on the other end of town where we bought canned fruit drinks. In chatting with the people there, we learned that all the workers in the local health center are village health workers, trained in workshops and special courses. Two of the trainers discussed with us the problem of finding medicinal plants now with so much of the country being burned. They told me about a book they use entitled *Where There Is No Doctor*, which describes local things people can use instead of relying on medication, so frequently unavailable.

That night they invited our musicians from eastern Nicaragua to the Health Center to record some of their music for

a radio program and seemed happy to announce that the musicians doing the background music for them were called Servants of Christ. My impression is that this isolated community probably has better health care than some of the areas closer to towns.

**F**RIDAY MORNING, the pastor and a local man, along with the twelve of us who were visiting, went by pickup truck about one and a half hours further southeast to a small river in the middle of a plantation of African palm trees which produce ingredients for soaps and perfumes. From there we walked for 45 minutes through palm groves and pasture land until we came to the Rio San Juan again. Across the river we saw a large Spanish fort on a hill flanked by houses along the river's edge. For this crossing, we used dugout canoes, rowed by an 86-year-old boatman who would not accept money from us for his work.

We walked through the town of El Castillo until we came to the local pastor/church planter's house. It was a simple wooden house with a dirt floor and a steep pitched roof covered with hand-split wooden shingles. It was very obvious that our group would not sleep in that little house along with the pastor's family of five children and an unknown

number of other people. We did not want to offend them, but when Marshall talked to the pastor about our looking for a modest hotel in town, he seemed to understand (perhaps he was relieved!).

In the afternoon a young man was baptized with maybe 60 people in attendance. Among them were two families from another Brethren in Christ church planting three hours away. Later we met outside the pastor's house for the evening evangelistic service. Since it was nearly a full moon, the only artificial light needed was a simple kerosene lamp on the table for the speaker. There were at least 80 persons present at this service, which ended with a child dedication.

During the service, we noticed about 15 people walking silently behind us on a little path that led out of town. We learned that these Nicaraguans were walking approximately two miles through the night to cross into Costa Rica. Nicaragua has low wages and high unemployment which has been exacerbated by the extended drought. Many have been going to Costa Rica to look for work where wages are higher and jobs are more available.

We spent 16 hours traveling home on Saturday. We left El Castillo at 4:30 a.m. on a large river boat. The river was beautiful and calm for the six and a half hours we traveled. While the large boat moved steadily forward, a smaller motor boat took passengers from the river boat to their destinations or brought passengers to the boat. Arriving at San Carlos, we immediately found a bus to Juigalpa and spent five of the next six hours on a very dusty and stony road. The last hour was on paved road. In Juigalpa we found the last bus to Managua for the day, and within 20 minutes were on our way again for the last three hours of our journey. When we arrived home at 9 p.m., our dusty house looked so clean, the shower was luxurious, and our familiar bed felt so comfortable.

We thanked God for the experience of being with brothers and sisters in the Lord in that distant place, but we were also thankful to come home!

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*Eleanor and Marshall Poe have been serving in Nicaragua since 1997, having returned after ten years of ministry in North America. They are members of the Lancaster (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church.*



# Inherited Religion?

by Thelma Book

A TV program caught my attention the other day. A Mrs. Kawamura, a woman in her late seventies, was being interviewed about her faith. As I began to get the gist of the conversation, my heart grew more and more heavy.

This woman had grown up in a Christian home in Tokyo and had been baptized a Christian. She married the son of a strongly Buddhist family in the town of Sammi in the early part of W.W.II. There were two clauses written into their marriage contract: first, that the young couple would not return to Sammi to live with the bridegroom's parents, but would continue their jobs in Tokyo, and second, that the bride would not be pressured to change her religion.

However, as the war became more intense, and the bombing of Tokyo made living there more and more precarious, the new bride went to live with the Kawamura family in Sammi, leaving her uni-

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## What testimony does my life bear? Am I winsome and revealing of Jesus? Or am I critical of others?

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versity teaching job. This family into which she came was not Buddhist simply by culture and custom; they were active and sincere believers in their religion. They meticulously kept their promise on the marriage contract and did not pressure the young woman to go to the temple or to pray before the large, gold-gilded Buddhist altar in their home. They even welcomed her reading the Bible and explaining it to them regularly. But rather than their being impressed by her faith, she began to be impressed by theirs.

A son's wife living in her husband's parents' home is referred to as the *oyome-san*. Often, the family members make the *oyome-san*'s life miserable by spreading stories about her mistakes or disliked facets of her personality in the neighbor-



hood. But this family was different. They treated her with respect. Another trait which she came to admire was their thankful spirit, no matter what happened. Several of the children had died while they were still young, yet the parents did not lament what life had dished out; instead, they were cheerful and lived lives of gratitude. A third characteristic that impressed her was their conversation. They did not gossip about the neighbors. Instead, they talked about religious themes.

These things intrigued the *oyome-san*. Gradually, she stopped reading the Bible and explaining Christianity to them and, instead, asked to go with them to the Buddhist temple. She began inquiring of Buddhist teachers and priests and reading books about Buddhism. For a time she became an agnostic. She actually traveled around Japan to listen to Buddhist teaching and ask questions. (I should explain that the Buddhist sect she was studying was the one started by the Japanese priest, Shinran. This is the only Buddhist sect that depends upon the mercy and grace of Buddha instead of good works for salvation. A Christian friend said to me once that if Shinran had lived after Christianity came to Japan, he would surely have become a Christian. But of course there is no sin, no estrangement between God and mankind in this teaching.)

In the end, Mrs. Kawamura turned her back on Christianity and embraced Buddhism. She said the person who had influenced her decision the most was the grandmother in the home who believed in Buddhism with all her heart and was content with herself and her world.

I am mistified and saddened that this woman turned her back on Jesus—whose birth and mission were prophesied in great detail from the beginning of human

history, whose life on earth confirmed those prophecies, and who lived, was crucified, and rose again—that she rejected Christ and knowingly embraced a religion totally man-made, the wishful thinking of centuries of people who admired Oshaka-samma's teachings (Buddha) when Oshaka-samma did not pretend to be a god of any kind.

I suspect that Mrs. Kawamura was a "second-hand" Christian—one whose parents or grandparents maybe had a true conversion, but she herself had only an inherited religion. She may never have had a personal relationship with Jesus. So, when she met people who truly tried to live lives free of the desires that make people dissatisfied and lead them to grasp for more and more, she was attracted by the ideal of Buddhism: to be released from all earthly desires, to lose selfhood, and to become one with the universe.

While I was watching this interview, I was praying in my heart, "O Lord, don't let this woman's testimony do damage to your cause in this land." But I was also examining my own life. Do I complain more often than I am thankful? Is the overall effect of my life here in Japan winsome and revealing of Jesus, or is it critical of my surroundings, of other people, and of situations? Few things are more beautiful than lives of daily gratitude, but neither can we live unexamined lives. Christian teaching is not supposed to support the status quo, but bring people to a desire for the forgiveness and change Jesus brings; to carry that living hope into every sin-darkened system and corner.

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*Doyle and Thelma Book serve as self-supporting missionary associates in Kitakyushu, Japan. They served in Japan under Brethren in Christ World Missions from 1955 to 1972 and have continued their ministry in Japan.*





# God at work in our world

## A good report

*Marshall Poe, Nicaragua missionary, and Ken Krause, layman from Bethel congregation in Michigan, visited Honduras in May. This is part of Marshall's report to the home office.*

I had not realized that our visit would coincide with a meeting that José Leon Herrera (church planting missionary in Honduras) had arranged with the church supervisors. He had planned a two-day meeting, and I was very happy to be there to see the supervisors and spend some informal time with them. There were at least 12 in attendance, including the Secretary and Vice President of the National Board.

José, Ken, and I attended the evening services at Los Piños and at Villa Nueva. I was particularly impressed Saturday night at Villa Nueva where there were over 80 people present, including some men and many adult women, plus the usual amount of children and youth. They had a very dynamic service.

Colonia Kennedy now has two worship services on Sunday. They have eliminated the adult Sunday school class and have a worship service for adults, as well as Sunday school for children, both in the morning and in the evening. A different group comes to each service, and José and his wife Yolanda say the sanctuary is filled both times.

Colonia Kennedy is located in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, and is the largest of the Brethren in Christ churches in Honduras. Los Piños and Villa Nueva are located just outside Tegucigalpa.

## Bangkok, Thailand

*The following is an excerpt from Jack and Trudy McClane's report on their visit to Bangkok in March 1998, as part of their administrative visit to Asia. Jack is the Executive Director of Brethren in Christ World Missions.*

Besides two days of renewal in a Bangkok guest house, we spent a wonderful day and a half in ministry and fellowship with Dr. and Mrs. Paitoon, with whom we had an extended lunch time on Monday. We heard Dr. Paitoon's dreams and aspirations and encouraged him in his strategy.

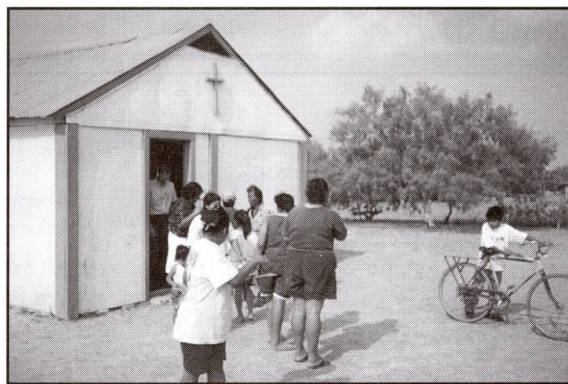
We spent Monday ministering with the Paitoons. We drove to an island—population 6,000—where they have taken the first step toward the establishment of a church. This is one of the places where the prayer walk team ministered last September under the direction of John Brubaker, Associate Director of Brethren in Christ World Missions, and Ken Hepner, pastor of the Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church. Recently, one of the elected leaders of this island was converted through the ministry of Dr. and

Mrs. Paitoon. She and her daughter are the only Christians on this island, and we pray that they will be the beginning of the first church. We spent the morning in their home singing, praying, and sharing the Scriptures. Her husband, not yet a Christian, spent the morning with us.

Dr. and Mrs. Paitoon have been coming to the island every Wednesday and intend to continue with this ministry. We believe the woman and her daughter had been truly converted, though they are obviously just babes in Christ. Our Bible study centered around Psalm 23. We remained on the island for a delightful lunch and then returned to our guest house. It was a day of ministry blessed by the Lord, and one which indicates the beginnings of reaching a new community with the gospel of God's grace.

## Where two or three gather

*Isaac and Connie Flagg are nearing completion of their language training in Texas in preparation for ministry among the Brethren in Christ churches in Mexico. Their home church is Heise Hill Brethren in Christ Church in Ontario, Canada. Isaac shares about his weekly ministry in Mexico.*



It's 1:00 in the afternoon and Trevor Main and I are ready to leave for the little town of Jacalitos. We visit this town two days each week with a Mexican national pastor, José Obdulio. We stop by his home in Reynosa to pick him up. We provide his transportation to Jacalitos, 30 miles south.

We take the passenger van today and arrive at his house about 2:00 p.m. We are warmly invited to visit with the eight other members of José's family as he gets ready to leave.

As the time approaches for us to leave, we notice that there are some people gathered around the van outside, and José tells us that we need to pick up some more people to help out with the ministry today.

As we leave Reynosa, I glance around at the people behind me and Trevor counts 31 people, about half of them children. It takes 10 minutes of smooth highway followed by 20 minutes of bumpy road to reach the little wooden church with the tin roof!

The service begins at 3:30 p.m. and

we arrive at 3:35—not bad! Many people from the village have already gathered.

Today we have a special treat, a video for the children. Since Jacalitos has no electricity, we hook an adapter to the battery of the van and run an extension cord to the TV/VCR, which has been placed on a bench seat that we've removed from the van and is now located under a large thorn tree. In the church, the music has started as Gabriel plays his guitar and the congregation swells to 65!

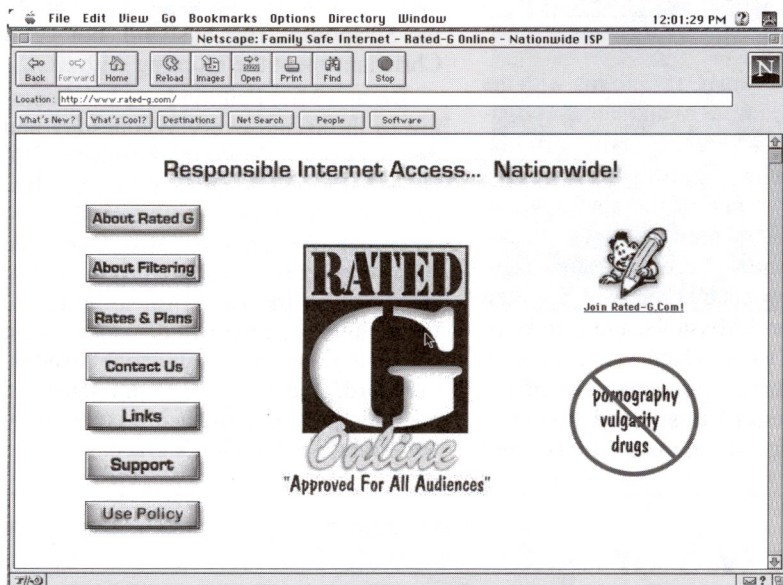
A woman from Reynosa ministers to the women who have gathered, while we help José with the children and the video. By 5:15 p.m. we're ready to make the trip back home. I am reminded that four ladies gave their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ just recently in Jacalitos, and I pray that the seeds planted today will grow in this little village in Mexico.

Thank you, Lord, for opportunities that remind me of why you have called me here, and thank you for the reminder that wherever two or three or sixty-five gather, you are in their midst!





# Safe surfin' on the Internet



## How to access the good without the bad and the ugly

by William M. Kruidenier

Imagine life under the following stressful scenarios. First, *the Life-threatening Library*:

"Mom, can I walk up the street to the library?" Billy called. "I need to find some books for my science project."

"Sorry, honey," Billy's mother replied. "I can't go with you right now. And you know the library is too dangerous a place for you to go by yourself."

Next, *the Malevolent Mall*:

"Bob, would you be willing to go to the mall with me tonight? I have to get some things for Jeff's camping trip," Marge asked her husband.

"Only as a last resort, Marge," her husband protested. "Call me old fashioned, but I still prefer to go shopping and see people with all their clothes on. I don't mind encountering new people and things. I just prefer they be dressed."

Finally, *the Revolting Restaurant*:

"That does it. That's the last straw," John seethed, throwing his napkin down on the table. "Lately, for every decent item I select from this menu, I get three side dishes that are inedible. Actually, that's putting it too nicely. They're revolting! What is going on?"

SEE A PATTERN in these predicaments? What if the places in your community that you now think of as an asset suddenly became a liability? The library, the mall, your favorite restaurant—you know they contain things you need and want, but the process of getting them has become far too dangerous and threatening.

Without a doubt, at some point you would be motivated to take action. You would either try to clean up your former favorite hangouts, or join with others to implement strategies for maintaining family values in the marketplace.

In some ways, the above scenario is what has happened on the Internet. What began as a

useful tool for accessing information from a myriad of sources has already become a liability—especially for families with children. As the purveyors of pornography, drugs, violence, and other crude forms of entertainment have launched sites on the World Wide Web, it's almost impossible not to encounter them. Whether through an innocent entry in a search engine or clicking on an enticing banner ad, anyone who uses the Internet for very long can quickly find themselves in deep moral water. And this is just the situation with responsible adults. The number of young people who have intentionally or accidentally become mired in pornography is shocking. Why is this happening? And, more importantly, what can be done about it?

### "Internet 101"

First, here's what has happened. Beginning as a Defense Department communication network connected by telephone lines, the Internet gradually extended links to educational and corporate research facilities. At this point, email and database queries were the Internet's primary uses.

But when a young computer scientist in Switzerland invented something called hypertext markup language, the ability to jump from one computer to another—anywhere in the world—became as simple as clicking a mouse button. And when a program called Mosaic was written (the forerunner of the Netscape Navigator web browser), the information you wanted—from anywhere in the world where a com-



puter was connected to a telephone line—could now be formatted with text, pictures, and information. Content formerly available only in traditional media formats—text, pictures, movies, sound (plus new formats such as virtual reality 3-D panoramic images)—could now be published and accessed by anyone, anytime, anywhere in the world.

The Internet actually combines into one delivery system the abilities of the three most revolutionary communication advances so far: The printing press (around 1450), the telephone (1876), and the television (1928).

### **The implications are astounding**

The implications of this information publishing revolution have been staggering. For the first time, a “publisher” whose office is his kitchen table can reach the same audience as a multi-million dollar publisher in New York City. On the upside, anyone with creative skills and a strong message or product can let the world know. On the downside, the exact opposite is also true. Anyone with a destructive or depraved message or product can also let the world know.

Before the Internet, individuals or small publishers were consigned to a small group of potential customers due to the costs of marketing and publishing. With the Internet, costs have become minimal and the whole world is your potential customer base. On the Internet, it costs no more to reach a billion people with your message than it does to reach one. (No one is charging anyone anything for duplicating electrons which travel at the speed of light around the globe!) If your product is print or graphics, your customers pay the production costs since they use their own printers to turn what’s on the Internet into hard copy.

These production and distribution economies of scale have spawned a tidal wave of pornographic and unhealthy content. Every person with a file full of pornography can now share his or her collection with the world. And many of them are doing just that. Can you say “revolution?”

### **A two-stage revolution**

The revolution has happened in two stages. Initially, existing publishers of information (whether G-rated or X-rated) began setting up web sites as quickly as possible, offering their wares for free. The costs were minimal, the technology easy to learn, and the audience eager. People who used to pay for magazine subscriptions were now viewing them online for free. “Wow!” said John Q. Public. “This is awesome!” The same people who used to publish pornography in books, magazines, movies, and videos discovered that far more people were eager for their wares than they had previ-

ously known about, because now pornography can be viewed in the privacy of the home. No purchases, no subscriptions, no returning videos to the local video outlet. Just point and click. Those for whom the public purchase of unwholesome content provided a check on their actions were now free of that restraint. As a result, the stories of those becoming entrapped in pornography on the Internet are legion.

The second stage is now in place. Instead of giving information and products away for free, vendors have now learned how to charge for services over the Internet. Currently you can buy almost anything over the Internet that you can buy in person. And shoppers are lining up to do so, bringing some popular shopping sites to a standstill during peak hours—especially sites that sell online access to live pornography shows. People who would never venture into an adult bookstore or video parlor in their hometown are now being tempted to do so via their credit card over the Internet.

As hard as it is to believe, all of this has happened in the space of five years (as opposed to the almost five centuries from the printing press to the television). And because no one owns the Internet game, everyone has been allowed to play. That includes the good, the bad, and the ugly, which translated means the edifying, the unwholesome, and the pornographic. Internet users have discovered that they are being bombarded with advertising for products and services that are completely offensive. They don’t even want to see the ads, much less the product. As a result, many have signed off the Internet in order to protect themselves and their families from an onslaught of content which they don’t want themselves or their families exposed to.

### **An option: filtering**

But is this the only alternative? As in the opening illustration, are we resigned to giving up the use of what is an amoral medium simply because it has become filled with immoral content? Or is there a way to “fight back” and enjoy the best of the Internet without having to wade through the worst? There is a way, and it is called filtered Internet access. Eighteen to 24 months ago, software filtering programs for home computers began appearing in the market. These programs were loaded on an individual computer and updated regularly with key words and Internet addresses that would be blocked. When an Internet site with a forbidden address or key word attempted to pass through the software filter, it would be prevented from appearing on the screen.

In an initial wave of enthusiasm, eager parents purchased these programs for their home computers. In a second wave—this time of ingenuity—creative kids figured out how to disable the filters whenever they wanted to.

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and the  
pornographic.***



And in a final wave—let's call it resignation—most of these filters went the way of the proverbial exercise machines littering America's homes. A good idea waned with the realization that effort and discipline was involved to make it work. The majority of people who bought individualized software filter packages do not use them effectively today.

Now, however, there seems to be a filtering concept that works. Known as ServerSide Filtering technology, this idea once again incorporates the concept of filters to exclude objectionable material. But now, the filters are removed from home computers and placed on the huge server computers through which a family, individual, or business connects to the Internet. The subscriber is now given filtered access to the Internet without installing or maintaining any software on his home computer. And best of all, the filters can not be tampered with by creative techno-teens. The sponsoring Internet Service Provider takes the responsibility for the cost and maintenance of the software filters. Server-Side Filtering appears to be an idea whose time has come.

The first company to implement nationwide Internet access using Server Side Technology is Rated-G Online, a service of 711.NET located in Charlotte, North Carolina. A Christian owned and operated company, 711.NET is an Internet marketing and services company seeking to serve the body of Christ by applying biblical values to the implementation of information technology. Chuck Stevens, President of 711.NET, reflects on what led to the founding

of Rated-G Online: "We simply decided that it was time to provide a choice to families and individuals who wanted the best of the Internet while avoiding the worst. Rated-G Online filters out 11 major categories of objectionable content—pornography, adult humor, violence, unlawful activities, ethnic hate, and others—and allows only that which is wholesome and edifying to reach our subscribers' home computers. The filtering also includes chat areas, newsgroups, and the other areas of the Internet which have so quickly been filled with degrading material. Families can now access the Internet and surf all day long without fear of what they will discover."

The Internet is monitored daily by a team of professionals at Rated-G Online who add new sites to the filtering databases as they are discovered. With thousands of new Web sites, chat rooms, and newsgroups coming online weekly, the only way to effectively and accurately filter the flood is daily, one site at a time.

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*Those interested in having filtered Internet access for themselves and families can subscribe by calling (888)711-6381, or visiting the Rated-G Online home page at <http://www.rated-ga.com>.*

## **MCC WEB SITE CLOCKS MORE THAN A MILLION VISITS**

Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) website has clocked more than a million visits since it was established in April 1995, and the average number per month continues to grow.

Last year the website averaged 46,000 visits per month—a rise of 30 percent from the year before. One visit does not necessarily equal one visitor. For example, a single visitor to the site may access three different stories, which would then be recorded as three visits.

"This level of interest in the site has been a bit of a surprise to us here in the communications department," says Kathleen Hull, editor of the site for MCC Canada. Web pages are typically rich in graphics and it is commonly believed they are a vital ingredient for a successful site.

"The MCC site defies this assumption in that it doesn't have a lot of graphics. It's what one person has called 'the

black-bumper version' of websites," says Hull.

MCC's site is probably as successful as it is because it is content-rich, she says. Average monthly usage peaks during November and April, when many college and university students are writing term papers.

What are the most visited parts of the site? By far the most popular are stories and sections dealing with justice issues such as capital punishment, crime, gun control, domestic violence, racism, and mediation and conflict resolution.

Africa seems to be of considerable interest, as is Ten Thousand Villages and a section titled "Mennonites in Canada, 1996." An MCC response to Robert McNamara's Confession on the Vietnam War was one of the 25 most visited of MCC's sites, as was Laos and a section on land mines. Also in the top 25 is resource catalogue information, the volunteer opportunities listing, information on immigration and refugees, children and youth, and Mennonite Disaster Service.

MCC is currently renovating the site. "With the site's popularity has come increasing pressure to grow," said Hull. "We're looking to build on what's working by further enriching its content and improving accessibility."

The website is located at <[www.mennonitecc.ca/mcc](http://www.mennonitecc.ca/mcc)>.



# THE DEVIL AND THE Churches

by A. Graybill Brubaker

The San Antonio Community Hospital in Upland, Calif., offers lectures to pastors every other month on subjects as diverse as hospital administration and the treatment of cancer. Of the hundreds of pastors within easy driving distance, the usual turnout is about eight pastors. However, one lecture was announced on the subject of stress and its management. The turnout doubled. Pastoral stress, at the turn of this millennium, is a threat to the very existence of the church as we know it.

During the lecture session, one pastor reported that he was in touch with about six pastors in the valley, every one of whom would quit if he knew an honorable way to do it. Another pastor's description of a church identified one of the most well-known and influential churches among the hundreds in the area. He reported that its pastor also would quit if he knew how.

One well-known pastor recounted his struggle with stress and depression. He was hit at the same time in his health, his family, and his church. It took months of prayerful struggle with costly counseling to overcome. Every church administrator is familiar with the syndrome and longs for help in saving these—God's choice servants—who are falling by the way-

side in alarming numbers. What is the cause of this epidemic and is there a cure? Or is it simply a symptom of these tense and trying times?

Blame is being placed on different things: It's the independent spirit of the times. It is either the "Boomer" or the "Buster" generation. Everyone in our time wants to do his own thing. The fully informed Internet surfer considers himself an authority on how a church should be run and wants his to run that way. The lavishly presented TV church is expected on the local level. The loss of respect for authority in every sphere is the cause.

At the same time, it is possible for the most vicious cult to thrive and even lead its followers in mass suicide! Blind obedience is demanded in many kinds of organizations from vigilante groups to private militias. Clearly, not everyone is trying to "do his own thing."

In our sophisticated way we are looking to psychology and sociology for our answers. We have outgrown the old recourse to the Scriptures for solutions to these problems. In any case, it

is not fashionable to consider that "Satan is alive and well on planet earth" and is doing what he has always been doing—warring against God and God's people. We do have a

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media...  
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Internet....  
The problem is  
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name for it now. We call it spiritual warfare. Some of the self-styled experts in that field are so explicit that they frighten us and we shy away from their bandwagons.

It is still the work of Satan, and there is no need to document the hierarchy of his "territorial spirits" to mount an offensive. And mount an offensive we must. If we do, we have the Lord's own words that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18, KJV).

The problem is in our churches. It is not in our television sets, in spite of the fact that they have held our authority figures up to ridicule until there is no respect for governor or clergy. It is not in the music media, even though that media has unleashed a wave of passion that defies restraint. It is not on the Internet, even though it is bringing into our very homes images of violence and porn that corrupts our minds and rots our souls. The problem is in our churches, and it is our best people who are being used of Satan to destroy our pastors.

This is not a new problem. Thelma Heisey Book has recorded an incident in the ministry of her late father, C. Ray Heisey, from more than 50 years ago which illustrates the problem. A good church member took an admirable action of Pastor Heisey and turned it into a source of evil gossip.\*

\*Thelma Heisey Book: "In Pursuit of Great Spoil," *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, Volume XX, No. 2, August 1997, page 131.

But the problem is much older than that. A King James word describes it well: backbiting (Proverbs 25:23).

Surely every pastor can recognize it. A church member comes to complain about something and ends the complaint with, "...and I am not the only one who feels this way." No further proof is needed that somewhere, sometime, there was a "backbiting" session—biting the pastor while his back was turned.

Every pastor must be and remain amenable to criticism—except those who consider themselves to be perfect. People will have their ideas about things in the church. However, backbiting should be seen as the sin it is. The admonition of Hebrews 13:17 cannot be ignored. "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you." Consider also 1 Tim 5:17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (KJV).

What then, does the "good" church member do when there is something that could well be called to the attention of the pastor? God bless the one who comes and says, "I am not the only one who feels this way." At least that member talked to the pastor about it. The others in the backbiting session must be entirely condemned.

However, there is a better way.

When we are talking in our little groups, as we all will, and the conversation begins to turn to a criticism of the pastor, the conscientious Christian should call a halt. At least he or she should say, "I cannot participate in this discussion, please excuse me." It would be better to say, "If we are to talk about this matter in this way we must ask the pastor to come and share his position with us. It may be that there are very good reasons why he cannot do this the way we would like for him to do it."

The best way to handle the situation is for the person who first has the idea to go to the pastor and present the idea to him. He may be delighted with the idea and be happy to accommodate it. He may, on the other hand, have a good explanation for the current practice.

Most church problems are hatched in backbiting sessions. These are Satan's doings and the "good" people who participate in them are his willing tools. Seen in this light, no one should need to come to the pastor to say, "I am not the only one who feels this way."

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*Graybill Brubaker has served in several pastorates, was a missionary in Zambia, and was a missions administrator in North America. He and his wife Ethel are now in Malawi, providing assistance to the Malawi Brethren in Christ Church in organizational and training capacities.*

**Question:** What costs less than a cup of coffee and a donut, is much better for your health, and is delivered to your house each month?

**ANSWER:** Each monthly issue of the *Evangelical Visitor*.

**Question:** Is there a good reason why I shouldn't subscribe to the *Visitor*?

**ANSWER:** No, there is **no** good reason not to subscribe to the only monthly magazine published by and for the Brethren in Christ Church. See the information on page 3 on how to subscribe.





# *The storms of life reveal what is inside of us*

by Greg Deardorff

**L**AST TUESDAY EVENING, strong winds ripped through our neighborhood. My wife Sheila and I were on our front porch when we heard an incredibly strong sound of wind rushing down Maple Avenue. Within seconds we saw two large limbs snap from a tree across the street. We soon discovered another tree on the corner had been completely uprooted. What we could not understand was why an even taller and larger tree, which stood between the two fallen trees, withstood the high winds.

A closer look revealed why the trees succumbed to the wind. The first tree was hollow on the inside. Although the trunk was firmly rooted, there was not sufficient strength in the limbs. The second tree was solid on the inside, but its root system was shallow. Without being firmly rooted, the tree had no way of withstanding the storm.

The result was debris scattered all over the street. Two slabs of sidewalk were raised up when the one tree was uprooted. An awning on a house across the street was hit by one of the limbs of the other tree. Two cars parked nearby escaped with minor damage. Fortunately no one was hurt.

There are at least five lessons we can learn about the storms of life. First, storms can come up fast. Many times there is no warning. One day you can be talking to your father and the next day get word that he had a heart attack. All of a sudden your

boss or a coworker turns against you and your job is suddenly in jeopardy. And be assured, storms will come in each of our lives.

Second, a storm will reveal if something has been eating away at us on the inside. If we snap or go to pieces when a storm comes, we frequently blame the circumstances. "I had no problem until those people started pressing me," we say. But the truth of the matter is this: who we are under pressure is who we really are. The storm brings to the surface past hurts or weaknesses which have not been properly dealt with.

Third, a storm will reveal if we are spiritually empty. A loved one dies and we don't know where to turn. A person turns to alcohol to try to fill the emptiness of a failing marriage. The possibility of a break-up with that special person finds you compromising your values in order to be loved. Storms in life reveal our spiritual emptiness.

Fourth, a storm will reveal if we are spiritually immature. If I get the word that I have cancer and walk away from God for the rest of my life, I reveal that my faith was not very deeply rooted. It is true that questioning and blaming God are typical grief responses everyone experiences for a period of time. However, these are stages one passes through while grieving, not a place where one who has deep faith roots continues to live.

Fifth, a storm in my life also affects the lives of others, especially if I was

wronged in the past or am spiritually empty or spiritually immature. Everything is connected. Hurt people hurt people. My pain affects others.

Simply understanding these lessons is not sufficient. We need to take appropriate steps to prepare for the storms which inevitably will come. Here are four suggestions.

First, expect storms in life. God allows them so we might see ourselves, make changes where needed, and become more like him.

Second, if we have been wronged in the past (and who hasn't), we need to face up to our past. We must deal with the pain. We must forgive those who have wronged us. This is making peace with humanity.

Third, if we are empty spiritually, we need to make peace with God. If we have gotten away from Christ and the church, now is the time to return.

Fourth, if we are spiritually shallow, we need to grow spiritually. We need to read our Bibles. We need to meet with other Christians, to pray together and to discover together what God has to say.

Remember, God promises to be with us during the storms of life—*especially* during the storms of life.

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*Greg Deardorff pastors the Hershey (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church.*





# Church News

Notes of Congregational Activities in North America

## Allegheny Conference

On May 10 the children of the Air Hill congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., presented the musical, "50th Annual Polk County Picnic." ♦ Don Shafer filled the pulpit of the **Chambersburg** church in June while the pastors were at a Venezuelan workcamp. The youth musical "Field of Souls" was May 31; the children's musical "The Amazing Scripture Memory Maze" was June 7. ♦ "Tales of the Kingdom" was the VBS theme June 15-19 at the **Fairview Ave.** church, Waynesboro, Pa. ♦ **The Five Forks** church, Waynesboro, planned a Sunday school picnic for June 7 at Quincy Community Center. The May 17 "Night of Light" service included prayer, testimony, drama, and music. ♦ The **Hollowell** church,

Waynesboro, had a roller skating event May 14. On May 17 the puppet team ministered at the **Chambersburg** church. Elizabeth Miller shared slides of Haiti in the evening.

On May 10 Becky Herr gave a report on her mission to Mexico to the **Martinsburg**, Pa., congregation. ♦ **The Mt. Tabor** church, Mercersburg, Pa., hosted a trip to Blair Outlet on May 9. The trustees held a work day May 30 with lunch served. ♦ Nancy Shoap shared at the May 9 women's breakfast of the **South Mountain** church, Shippensburg, Pa. On May 17 Ken Anthony spoke about his new church planting in the Altoona area. ♦ **The Spring Hope** women, Schellsburg, Pa., had their mother-day banquet May 7 at Ivy Stone Restaurant.

## Atlantic Conference

The **Cross Roads** church, Mount Joy, Pa., had a teacher appreciation banquet May 13. On June 14, Bruce and Merly Bundy, missionaries to Spain, spoke in the morning service. ♦ May 3 was Clubs Sunday at the **Fairland** church,

## CPS REUNION

The 53rd Annual Civilian Public Service Reunion will be held August 19 and 20, 1998 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pa. Open to all who served in a CPS Camp during World War II. Programs and registration forms will be sent to those on the mailing list. If you want to be sure you are on the mailing list or want more information, call or write to; Irvin E. Cordell, 57. E. Grandview Ave. Mercersburg, PA (717) 328-2746.

Cleona, Pa., with a program in the service and family fun in the afternoon. On June 7 Ken Dissinger showed slides of his visit to Cuban churches. ♦ John Keefer spoke on Ephesians 4 at the love feast service May 24 of the **Free Grace** congregation, Millersburg, Pa. ♦ A mother-daughter breakfast May 9 for 88 women of the **Hempfield** church, Lancaster, Pa., was at Four Seasons Restaurant. Rhoda Oberholtzer spoke on "Scripture in Floral Design." ♦ **The Lancaster**, Pa., church hosted a kids' recreation night May 13 with a meal, crafts, and games. ♦ Singers from the **Manheim**, Pa., congregation combined voices with the **Refton**, Pa., church choir May 3 for an evening concert at Manheim.

On May 3 the Clarion Choir of the **Manor** church, Mountville, Pa., presented "Miracle After Miracle" directed by Arlene Gobble. The guest speaker May 31 was David Chow. ♦ On May 17 Tim and Jill Placeway gave an evening concert for the **Mt. Pleasant** congregation, Mount Joy, Pa. ♦ **The New Covenant** congregation, Quakertown, Pa., received six new members on May 17. On May 3 Sarah Hollenbach and Alma Yothers shared about their recent trip to Haiti. ♦ Six persons were baptized May 17 into the fellowship of the **New Joy** church, Akron, Pa.; 14 new members were welcomed May 31. A local chapter of the Christian Motorcycle Assoc. visited the service on June 14. ♦ On May 13, two men from the Mechanicsburg church (Susquehanna Conference) visited the **Palmyra**, Pa., church to teach how to organize and conduct prayer walks.

The **Pequea**, Pa., congregation had a May 31 outdoor service and picnic at Safe Harbor Park. A 12-week Wednesday evening course on discovering spiritual gifts began May 13. ♦ Pastor Dan Keefer led a

study recently for the **Refton**, Pa., congregation on the book *Experiencing God*. ♦ June 5 and 6 were photo days for the new pictorial directory of the **Silverdale**, Pa., church. ♦ **The Skyline View** church, Harrisburg, Pa., provides a support person for two years to anyone in the church who has lost a spouse. The summer sermons are focusing on questions asked by people who don't attend church. ♦ **The Speedwell Heights** church, Lititz, Pa., is receiving contractor bids for the new church. ♦ Don Fry was installed June 7 as pastor of the **Summit View** church, New Holland, Pa. Pastor Hock's final preaching Sunday was May 17.

## Canadian Conference

May 3 was Friend Day with service and smorgasbord at the **Bridlewood** church, Agincourt, Ont. Secret pals were revealed at the June 7 women's luncheon. ♦ The Jr. Choir of the **Heise Hill** congregation, Gormley, Ont., presented "Short-Stop" on June 14. ♦ Carlin Fehr from Columbia Bible College was the summer intern May 18—Aug. 30 for the **Kindersley**, Sask., congregation. ♦ On May 30 the youth of the **Massey Place** congregation, Saskatoon, Sask., hosted a mother-father banquet. The women's ministry garage sale was planned for early May. ♦ On May 24 each Sunday school class of the **Oak Ridges**, Ont., church submitted a banner for a "mission statement banner parade." ♦ On June 14 Marion Ford presented the true story of Ravensbrück concentration camp survivor Corrie ten Boom to the **Orchard Creek** congregation, St. Catharines, Ont.

The **Ridgemount** congregation, Hamilton, Ont., hosted a garage sale May 23. The church joined with Compassion Canada to provide five hot meals and snacks each day to

**The 26th Annual Hymn Sing**  
at  
**Historic Ringgold Meeting House**  
**Ringgold, Maryland**  
**Sunday,**  
**Aug. 30, 1998**  
**at 5:00 p.m.**  
**in the Meeting House**

Sponsored by Ringgold Meeting House Committee and Area Churches

Nelson Wingert, Song Leader

For more information, contact Avery Zook, 6080 Cumberland Highway, Chambersburg, PA 17201. Phone (717) 264-2580.

Directions: Take Rt. 997 south from Waynesboro which becomes MD 64. Turn left at the sign to Ringgold. About 1/2 mile, turn left. The church will be seen among the trees.

## Schedule of Events

Board meetings are held at Grantham, Pa., unless otherwise noted. For more information, contact the denominational office, P.O. Box 290, Grantham, Pa. 17027; phone (717) 697-2634.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| July 16-18     | Core Course "Theology of Salvation"—West Milton, Ohio |
| July 31-Aug. 9 | Roxbury Holiness Camp                                 |
| Aug. 14-19     | Niagara Camp  |
| Nov. 1-3       | Leadership Council Retreat                            |
| Nov. 4-5       | Leadership Council                                    |
| Nov. 5-7       | Pastor/Spouse Orientation                             |



Kenyan children. ♦ On May 3 Doug Sider spoke in the service of the **Rosebank** church, Petersburg, Ont., after which his parents, Bruce and Annie Sider, were honored with a potluck and presentation for their 60th wedding anniversary. ♦ The Prime Timers of the **Sherkston**, Ont., church had a spring luncheon May 31 at Stevensville Garden Gallery. The children presented "Fat Fat Jehoshaphat" May 31. ♦ The **Springvale**, Ont., church has new offering plates in memory of Pastor Silvestro. Charles and Leone Byer of Navajo Mission spoke May 24.

The Unashamed Quartet was in concert May 16 at the **Stayner**, Ont., church. The congregation has approved a Christian education staff position. ♦ More than 100 men and boys attended the annual Christian Service Brigade banquet at the **Wainfleet**, Ont., church on May 22. The highlight was a film about Dave Dravecky: "A Story of Courage and Grace." ♦ On May 23 the **Welland**, Ont., church seniors hosted 110 seniors from 10 Brethren in Christ area churches. Bishop Wenger spoke and an NCC music group provided music. ♦ Senior youth from the **Westheights** church, Kitchener, Ont., joined with 100 youth for a retreat at Muskoka Baptist Conference on May 15-18. Decisions were made for Christ and youth were challenged spiritually.

## Central Conference

The mother-daughter banquet May 9 of the **Amherst** congregation, Massillon, Ohio, was "An Evening in the Secret Garden." Bob Geiger, missionary to Colombia, spoke May 24. ♦ Music in the May 10 Mother's Day service of the **Beulah Chapel** church, Springfield, Ohio, was by a three-generation trio of women. ♦ The **Carland-Zion** congregation, Owosso, Mich., recently has held Friday evening renewal services with guest ministers from many different churches. Bishop Byers joined the congregation for the Apr. 26 service. ♦ The **Christian Union** church, Garrett, Ind., had a teacher training event May 16 led by Sandy Handshoe. Three persons were baptized May 31. ♦ The quiz team of the **Lakeview** church, Goodrich, Mich., had a June 12 garage sale at which they auctioned Beanie Babies. The church's fifth annual golf scramble was June 13.

Shannon Simpson of the **Northgate** fellowship, Tipp City, Ohio, spent two weeks in Costa Rica recently. The youth had a fund raiser spaghetti dinner May 31 for their summer trip to Toronto. ♦ Bob

Geiger spoke May 17 to the **Pleasant Hill**, Ohio, church about Colombia. ♦ On May 6 the **Sippo Valley** church, Massillon, Ohio, showed the "Jesus" film to discuss it as a possible outreach tool. The church dedicated a new altar on May 24. ♦ On May 3, 36 women attended the mother-daughter banquet of the **Valley Chapel** congregation, East Canton, Ohio, with Edna Ely of Special Touch Ministries speaking. On May 17 the church honored Eugene and Mary Sue Rohrer for their many years of service. Most of their family attended. ♦ A mixed quartet from the **Wooster**, Ohio, church sang at the Northern Ohio Fifth Sunday Singspiration May 31 at the **Christ Chapel** church, Ravenna, Ohio.

## Midwest Conference

The May 31 fifth Sunday joint service for the Kansas churches included an ice cream social at the Seelye Mansion in Abilene. ♦ Ray Bert, church planter in Colorado Springs, gave the evening message May 17 to the **Bethany** congregation, Thomas, Okla. After the service a reception was held for six graduates. On May 22-24, 17 adults and youth traveled to Six Flags in Dallas. ♦ On May 27 Phil Keefer spoke to the **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Kan., on giving and Cooperative Ministries.

## Pacific Conference

The **Pacific Highway** congregation, Salem, Ore., publicized the 100-year milestone of Brethren in Christ missions by utilizing posters, bulletin inserts, and bulletin board displays. ♦ Ron Hall will be coming on staff of the **Upland**, Calif., church in the fall to facilitate cell groups ministry. The kids presented "We Are America" on June 14. ♦ The **Walnut**, Pa., congregation celebrated Pastor Schletewitz's 20th anniversary in ministry on June 7. On June 28 Mike and Pam Rozells

of Potter's Field Ministry spoke in the service.

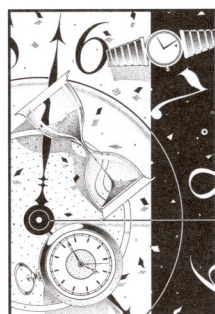
## Southeast Conference

The youth of the **Highland Park** congregation, Dublin, Va., planned a canoe trip on the New River for May 31. ♦ God's Bible School Male Quartet was in concert June 19 in the evening at the **Millerfields** church, Columbia, Ky. ♦ The **Ridge View** church, Roanoke, Va., hosted a "Spring Training for Ministry" event on May 16.

## Susquehanna Conference

The Mountain Anthems sang in the June 7 service at the **Big Valley** church, Belleville, Pa. A Sunday

school picnic was planned for June 12. ♦ The **Carlisle**, Pa., church hosted a Christian education appreciation dinner May 13. Dave Miller led a young adult retreat May 22-24 on "Discipline for Growth." ♦ The **Cedar Grove** church, Mifflintown, Pa., hosted family fun day immediately after the May 17 services. ♦ The men of the **Dillsburg**, Pa., church helped drywall a house for Agape Residential Ministries on May 16. Phaitoon Hathamart from Bangkok, Thailand, spoke on May 24. ♦ Baritone Tim Beitzel gave a concert in the May 31 Rally Day service of the **Fairview** church, New Cumberland, Pa. The congregation is now calling itself Abundant Grace Fellowship.



# E.V. TimeLines

Selected from the archives of the EVANGELICAL VISITOR

## 100 Years Ago

July 1, 1898—In a letter dated May 19, Jesse Engle reports that the first missionary party sent by the Brethren in Christ Church overseas arrived in Bulawayo on May 3. "Soon after our arrival, arrangements were made to find a suitable location for a Mission.... After a search through the [Matopo Hills], we found a spot well watered, and sufficient land to locate; which later proved to be...private property. This would have been a desirable place...."

## 75 Years Ago

July 9, 1923—In an article titled "A Few Thoughts Regarding Our Church Paper," C.C. Burkholder writes, "...We are confident that much talent that is amongst us as a people is being buried along the line of original material that would be to the glory of God and welfare of the church at large, should we all allow the Lord to use us."

## 50 Years Ago

July 12, 1948—Charlie Byers, in an article titled "The Old Man"; "There's no double standard in God's holy word. God Almighty only has one standard, and this is a h-o-l-y standard, and you need to get sanctified wholly to live the holy standard you received when you were justified. This idea is false that if I only claim to be justified, I can allow some sins. God expects the actions and performances of your life outwardly to be just as righteous in the justified life as in the sanctified life. The reason you need to get sanctified is this, you'll find that you don't have power to live that holy standard without it."

*continued on page 21*

## Position Available

Evangel Press has an opening for a printing sales representative. Sales area covers Indiana and northern Kentucky. Salary is \$30,000 plus commission. Contact Glenwyn Cassel at Evangel Press, (800) 253-9315.



## E.V. TimeLines

continued from page 19

### 25 Years Ago

July 10, 1973—In an editorial titled "Let's Not Be Weary," John Zercher writes: "The church has turned inward. [But] the Lord of the church characterized his ministry as that of a servant. He went around doing good. The all-night prayer vigils or the mountain top retreat did not raise him beyond touching the leprous man or healing the epileptic child. He was careful to keep the two commandments—love of God and love of neighbor—together. There is the ever subtle temptation to substitute experience for sacrifice and an inner piety, that insulates us from the heartbreak of the world, for the demands of self-giving. There is the temptation to allow our conscience to be deadened by a doctrine of the last times and we write off the world before God does."

### 10 Years Ago

July 1988—In an article entitled "Keeping the back-door closed," J. Daniel Houck outlined five principles that draw people to a congregation and help to keep them involved. He concluded, "The best way to keep people from wanting to find the 'back door' is to provide them a place to grow, to serve, to love, and to be loved."

The summer children's musical June 25 in the new sanctuary of the **Grantham, Pa.**, church was "100% Chance of Rain." ♦ The youth of the **Jemison Valley** church, Westfield, Pa., hosted a coffee house concert Apr. 25 with the group Testify. The women's spring banquet and talent show was May 16. ♦ Layne Lebo has been given the title of executive pastor of the **Mechanicsburg, Pa.**, church, with more administrative duties, freeing Pastor Hepner for teaching, preaching, and writing. ♦ The **Messiah Village** church, Mechanicsburg, welcomed nine new members on May 3. Pastor Janet Peifer has earned her Doctor of Ministry degree. ♦ Twelve persons were baptized May 17 into the fellowship of the **Redland Valley** church, York Haven, Pa.

*Would you like to see news reports from your congregation in these columns? Ask your church to appoint a correspondent. Then simply follow the guidelines available from the Visitor office for submission of information. News for this issue was due June 1. News for the September issue is due by Aug. 1.*

## For The Record

### Births

**Bowman:** Elaine Hope, Apr. 28; Greg and Sue Bowman, Summit View congregation, Pa.

**Bowman:** Parker, May 20; Gregg and Tabetha (Trautman) Bowman, Speedwell Heights congregation, Pa.

**Golden:** Colleen Ariel, May 1; Chris and Deanna (Gift) Golden, Five Forks congregation, Pa.

**Heilman:** Alexander Joseph, May 8; Samuel and Dawn (Gish) Heilman, Fairland congregation, Pa.

**Hossler:** Kelly Lynn, May 21; Loren and Audrey Hossler, Speedwell Heights congregation, Pa.

**Julian:** Kadia Sage, Apr. 29; David and Nicole (Telesco) Julian, Manor congregation, Pa.

**Kemrer:** Reuben Charles, May 5; Brian and Georgann (Kibler) Kemrer, Manor congregation, Pa.

**Kolp:** Trevor Lee, Apr. 24; Gary

## MONEY MATTERS

### Cooperative Ministries—laborers together with God

One of the greatest truths of the Bible is that all Christians are "laborers together with God." This simply means that all members of the church are partners with God in his plan to build his church worldwide. Cooperative Ministries is all of us working in partnership with God and the body of Christ to proclaim his "good news" throughout the world.

#### What is it?

Cooperative Ministries is a mission-based system. In a mission-based system, donors contribute to a unified fund (Cooperative Ministries) that is divided among various causes based on needs as determined by Leadership Council.

In a mission-based system, funding is based on need and identified mission. The most vital and urgent needs and the ongoing needs of operation are funded. The system is designed to provide stability and continuity in funding so the mission of the

Brethren in Christ can be carried out over a long period of time.

Promotion is done in order that donors see and support a broad mission enterprise. The mission-based system serves as an important aspect of our identity. The system within itself is more efficient, less competitive, and less costly.

Cooperative Ministries supports eight General Conference ministries, seven United States regional conferences, the Vision Fund, and Messiah College.

#### How is it funded?

Cooperative Ministries is funded two ways. First and foremost, it is funded by the regular giving of congregations. Annually, congregations are encouraged to establish a goal for Cooperative Ministries. The total for congregational goals for 1998 is \$2,517,191.

Second, Cooperative Ministries is funded by individuals. Individuals are encouraged to give regular and generous support to their local congregation before giving to Cooperative Ministries.

Congregations and individuals can give to Cooperative Ministries in two ways: shared and designated contribu-

### Cooperative Ministries

Receipts, Year to Date	January 1–May 31, 1998			
	United States		Canada	
	1998	1997	1998	1997
<b>Proportionate</b>	<u>860,084</u>	<u>808,506</u>	<u>139,198</u>	<u>135,653</u>
Congregational	833,394	765,942	139,198	134,596
Individual	26,690	42,564	0	1,057
<b>Designated and Direct Giving</b>	<u>276,571</u>	<u>221,347</u>	<u>22,443</u>	<u>21,806</u>
Congregational	173,695	120,526	22,443	20,156
Individual	102,876	100,821	0	1,650
<b>Total to Date</b>	<u>1,136,655</u>	<u>1,029,853</u>	<u>139,198</u>	<u>135,653</u>
Total Budget	3,768,911	3,877,632	452,000*	419,000*
<b>Received to Date</b>	30.2%	26.6%	31%	32%

\*Note: Canadian Conference total budget does not include designated or direct giving.



and Cindy Kolp, New Joy congregation, Pa.

**Peachey:** Krista Lynn, May 20; Daryl and Sherry (Allison) Peachey, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

**Rambler:** Cassandra Lynn, May 8; Steve and Karen (Krieder) Rambler, Manheim congregation, Pa.

**Raush:** Coleman Alan, May 6; Alan and Martha (Herr) Raush, Manor congregation, Pa.

**Reichenbach:** Ty Christopher, May 14; Scott and Chris Reichenbach, Five Forks congregation, Pa.

**Ruppert:** Abigail Lorraine, Apr. 20; Bill and Kathryn (Sheffer) Ruppert, Stayner congregation, Ont.

**Shetter:** Braxton Isaac, Apr. 15; Kelly and Joetta (Bert) Shetter, Mt. Rock congregation, Pa.

**Stinson:** Mathew David, Apr. 17; Terry and Tracy Stinson, Five Forks congregation, Pa.

**Tolley:** Austin Drake, Apr. 14; Randy and Gwen Tolley, Pleasant Valley congregation, Pa.

**Yoder:** Ryan Cordell, Apr. 27; Lin and Bonie Yoder, Five Forks congregation, Pa.

## Weddings

**Atkins-Flaig:** Cindy Lee, daughter of Kenneth and Emma Flaig, Calgary, Alb., and Michael John, son of Douglas and Nancy Atkins, Crystal Beach, Ont., Apr. 25, at Sherkston Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Pat Hannigan and Rev. Leonard J. Chester officiating.

**Heisey-Geib:** Dawn Geib, daughter of Frederick and Almeda Geib, Silverdale, Pa., and Stanley, son of Warren and Beverly Heisey, Harfield, Pa., Apr. 4, at Silverdale Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Frederick L. Geib officiating.

**Hyde-Keefer:** Dallie Keefer, Chambersburg, Pa., and Richard Hyde, Biglerville, Pa., May 23, in an outdoor ceremony, with Rev. Roy E. Brake Sr. and Rev. Joel Nogle officiating.

**Klugh-Klugh:** Deborah Klugh and Henry Klugh, Apr. 24, at Mount Pleasant Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Roy Peterman officiating.

**Scott-High:** Heather Marie High, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alan R. High and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Richards, and Kevin Eugene, son of H. Eugene Scott and

Lillian Scott, May 23, at Hollowell Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Lee E. Nunemaker Jr. officiating.

**Sheffer-Harvey:** Crystal Dawn, daughter of James and Jan Harvey, Stayner, Ont., and Howard Walter, son of Walter and Audrey Sheffer, Stayner, Ont., Apr. 25, at Stayner Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Ryan Brown officiating.

**Wallace-Raisner:** Lynda Raisner, Sellersville, Pa., and Alfred Wallace, Perkasio, Pa., May 23, at Silverdale Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Frederick L. Geib officiating.

## Obituaries

**Beltz:** Roy F. Beltz, born Dec. 12, 1913, son of Clarence and Cora Garling Beltz, died Mar. 11. Surviving are his wife, Bertha M. (Wenger); and two sisters, Mary Jane Shatzley and Anna Tarner. Roy was a resident at Messiah Village since January 1997. He was a former employee of Valley Baking Co. and Wenger Baker; the first caretaker of the Roxbury Campground; a former caretaker of Camp Freedom; and worked for the Brethren in

Christ Home Mission Board. He was a member of the Air Hill congregation, Pa., where the funeral was held with Rev. Marion J. Heisey officiating. Interment was in Air Hill Cemetery (Letterkenny Twp.).

**Cober:** Lucinda Anne Cober, born Oct. 17, 1922, in Des Moines, Iowa, daughter of Edwin and Louella Wyld, died Apr. 19. Preceding her in death were her husband, Earl Cober; and a son, Roy. Surviving are a son, Jim; a daughter, Arlene Cober; stepchildren, Ellen Kennedy; Peter; Clayton; Glen; Lloyd; Ruth Hoover; and Phyllis Barfoot; 18 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; 2 brothers, Edwin and Ernest; and a sister, Lily Wilson. Lucinda loved children, and did home mission work for the Brethren in Christ at the Mount Carmel Home, Buffalo Mission, Navajo Mission, and Saxton Mission Church. She was a member of the Fordwich congregation, Ont., where the funeral was held with Rev. Ken Smith and Rev. Wayne Topping officiating. Interment was in Maple Grove Cemetery.

**Coy:** Mary E. Coy, born Aug. 18, 1915, daughter of Samuel and

tions. Shared contributions are divided among the 17 ministries and conferences which constitute Cooperative Ministries. Designated gifts are contributions given for the exclusive benefit of a ministry or conference.

### How are the funds distributed?

Shared gifts are divided among the 17 ministries and conferences which constitute Cooperative Ministries. Each ministry or conference receives an amount equal to their percentage of the total budget. (Example: Evangelism and Church Planting's Cooperative Ministries amount is \$494,350 or 13.12% of the total budget of \$3,769,181.) Therefore, Evangelism and Church Planting will receive 13.12 cents of each shared dollar. This pattern is followed for congregational and individual shared contributions.

Designated gifts can be sent to the general church office designated for a specific ministry or a designated gift can be sent directly to a ministry or conference. In either case, the donor's wish will be honored.

When a ministry or conference is fully funded, their portion of future

shared contributions are distributed among the remaining ministries and conferences. Should a ministry or conference continue to receive designated contributions after being fully funded, subsequent designated gifts are considered as an advance against their next year's Cooperative Ministries budget.

Another great truth of the Bible is that the church we are building is the church of Jesus Christ. When Jesus asked Peter, "Who do you think I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Peter knew who Christ was because it was revealed to him by the Father in Heaven. Jesus is counting on the likes of Peter to build his church; people who know who Jesus is; people who know him as the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

As "laborers together with God," we labor together in different ways. One way is by giving so that people who have been called to serve can serve in building his church. Thanks to each congregation and individual for your part in our mission-based approach—Cooperative Ministries.

*Phil Keefer is Director of Stewardship for the Brethren in Christ Church.*

### 1998 Cooperative Ministries Budget

Leadership-General	281,121
Leadership-Regional	457,167
Brotherhood Concerns	96,000
Congregational Life	11,950
Evangelism & Church Planting	494,350
Ministry & Doctrine	34,500
Stewardship Services	205,493
World Missions	1,518,028
Messiah College	83,863
Total (General)	3,182,472
Allegheny Conference	74,700
Atlantic Conference	112,887
Central Conference	56,041
Midwest Conference	45,750
Pacific Conference	73,529
Southeast Conference	13,500
Susquehanna Conference	70,000
Total (Regional Conf.)	446,407
Vision Fund	140,302
TOTAL	3,769,181



# MESSIAH COLLEGE NEWS

## Messiah College creates \$10,000 scholarship for local minority students

Messiah College will create an annual \$10,000 scholarship—designated for an ethnic minority student from the greater Harrisburg area—in honor of retiring Academic Dean, Dorothy J. Gish.

Provost Donald B. Kraybill announced the scholarship publicly for the first time at Dr. Gish's retirement dinner, held at the college on May 18.

"Dr. Gish has worked tirelessly for 26 years to advance the cause of minority

students on campus, and to provide valuable support services for this important group," said Dr. Kraybill. "She has also built many bridges between Messiah College and the Harrisburg community through a broad range of internships, academic partnerships, and urban outreach programs," he continued.

The Dorothy J. Gish Scholarship, which will be awarded based on a combination of academic merit and financial need, will be effective fall of 1999. Interested students may contact the Messiah College Admissions Office at (717) 691-6000.



In her 26 years at Messiah College, Dr. Gish served in a number of different teaching and administrative capacities, including chair of the home economics and behavioral science departments, assistant dean, associate dean of the faculty, and most recently academic dean, where she served for five years as the college's chief academic officer. During her academic career, she established the Early Childhood Education Learning Center, Scholar Intern Program, and many other key programs. She also provided leadership in developing Messiah's current faculty evaluation and student advising systems, as well as its faculty development and grants program. Dr. Gish has served and continues to serve on a number of boards, such as the Messiah Children's Home, Mennonite Health Services, Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter, and Messiah Village.

## Cross-Currents in the Church: Shaping our Theology

*(A Study Conference Sponsored by the  
Center for Brethren in Christ Studies)*

**OCTOBER 5, 1998**

### MONDAY MORNING

Chair: Lynn Thrush

Defining the Issues: Warren Hoffman

Case Studies from History

Holiness: Luke Keefer, Jr.

Peace: David Zercher

Plenary discussion

### MONDAY AFTERNOON

Chair: Dixie Yoder

Principles of Discernment: Harvey Sider

Case Studies from the Present

Spiritual Warfare: John Hawbaker

Promise Keepers: Robert Ives

Interest group discussion

### MONDAY EVENING

Chair: Kathleen Leadley

Report from the interest groups discussion

Keeping the Center: David Hall

Discussion

Where Do We Go From Here?: Kenneth Hoke

For further information, contact E. Morris Sider at Messiah College. Phone: (717) 691-6048; e-mail: msider@messiah.edu.

## For the Record...

*continued from page 21*

Marjorie Kelso Rosenberry, died Apr. 24. Preceding her in death were her husbands Wallace Shope and Ernest Coy Sr.; a son; and 2 brothers. Surviving are 2 sons, Richard and Donald Shope; 5 daughters, Geraldine Perry, Juanita Doyle, Brenda Yohe, Sara Walck, and Elsie Cooper; 19 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; 13 stepgrandchildren; a great-great-granddaughter; and nieces and nephews. Mary was active in the Servants of Christ Sunday school class of the Mt. Rock congregation, where she was a member; the Golden Age Club; and the Senior Citizens Center of Shippensburg. The funeral was at the Mt. Rock church with Rev. Lloyd T. Zimmerman and Rev. Bob Murr officiating. Interment was in Otterbein Cemetery (Lurgan Twp.).

**Frost:** Robert Frost, born Nov. 14, 1928, son of Warren and Annie Sherman Frost, died Mar. 8. A daughter, Evanna, preceded him in death. Surviving are his spouse, Juanita; and two sons, Michael W. and R. Russell. Robert was an Army veteran, retired from Conrail, a former assistant Scoutmaster, a member of the Skyline View congregation, Pa., and of the Upper Adams Fish and Game Assoc. The funeral was held at the church with Rev. John R. Reitz officiating. Interment was in Mt. Victory Cemetery (Cumberland Co.).

**Goins:** Mabrie L. Goins, born Mar. 13, 1912, son of Leonard and

Ethel Goins, in Oklahoma City, died Feb. 1. Preceding him in death were a sister, Janna; and brothers, Oscar, Louis, and Lenard. Surviving are his wife, Anna; a son, Maynard; a daughter, Marie Donaldson; three grandchildren; two stepgrandchildren; two stepgreat-grandchildren; a sister, Ardith; and a brother, Dwight. Mabrie's family was part of the Upland congregation, Calif., for many years. He graduated from Upland College Academy. The funeral was held at Bethany Mennonite Brethren Church (Fresno) with Rev. Samuel Freshwater and Rev. Lesley Mark officiating. Interment was in Fresno Memorial Gardens.

**Myers:** Elizabeth M. Myers, born May 12, 1911, daughter of Jesse W. and Emma L. Musser Myers, died May 15. Surviving are a nieces and nephews. Elizabeth had been a resident at Messiah Village since August 1984. She was a registered nurse at Harrisburg Hospital and had been the first administrator and superintendent of Seidle Hospital, Mechanicsburg. She was a former member of the Mechanicsburg congregation (Pa.) and a member of the Messiah Village congregation. The funeral was held at the Messiah Village Chapel with Rev. J. Robert Lehman officiating. Interment was in Mechanicsburg Cemetery.

**Thompson:** Timothy R. Thompson, born Apr. 17, 1913, in Allentown, Pa., died Mar. 6. He was a member of the New Covenant congregation, Pa. The funeral was held at the Silverdale, Pa., church with Rev. Joe Hyatt officiating. Interment was in Silverdale Cemetery.



# New vitality seen in Christian Holiness Partnership

by John A. Byers

The 1998 Christian Holiness Convention convened in April at the Kansas City Marriott Downtown Hotel. The theme was "A New Vision for Preaching Holiness."

This convention marked a transition time for what began as the National Camp Meeting Association, later became the Christian Holiness Association and now is the Christian Holiness Partnership. The name change represents a new direction for the membership. There is an intentional effort to be "partners" in pursuing, promoting and proclaiming the truth of scriptural holiness.

Several significant factors mark the conclusion of the Partnership's first year. The convention had a greater emphasis on teaching seminars relating to today's issues. Charles Lehman was challenged by the speakers and seminars enhanced his understanding of spiritual warfare. A publishing venture, known as the Partnership Press,

was formed. The first book, *The Hunger of Your Heart*, was released at the convention. All Brethren in Christ pastors will receive a copy of the book, courtesy of the Jacob Engle Foundation. Next year there will be a book written by Dr. Dennis Kinlaw.

Six Brethren in Christ attended the convention and shared in a Wednesday breakfast. Five Brethren in Christ

serve on various commissions and committees.

The Partnership believes it has a new vision. This was affirmed by John Hawbaker who "found new vitality in the Partnership." It also recognizes there is a challenge ahead. One is to reach the younger generation.

The CHP and its related members invite you to attend the 1999 convention to be held April 13-15 at the Founders Inn, Virginia Beach, Va. Until then, visit the CHP web page at <http://www.holiness.org> to keep informed of new developments.

## Contributions invited for *Dialogue* and *Readers Respond*

Persons contributing to *Readers Respond* (letters to the editor) are encouraged to be concise. Letters may be shortened. All letters must be signed. Occasionally we may decide to withhold names due to special circumstances.

Longer contributions are welcomed for *Dialogue*, a forum for readers to express their opinions on a broad range of topics relevant to the mission of the church and to living the Christian life.

**You may send your responses by e-mail at this address: [eph@tln.net](mailto:eph@tln.net).**

Each article or letter represents the view of the writer, and does not necessarily reflect the official position or policy of the Brethren in Christ Church or this periodical.

Brethren in Christ World Missions presents

## A STRANGE NEW RELIGION COMES TO THE NDEBELE

An original Zimbabwean Drama by playwright Isaac Mpofu



A troupe of Zimbabwean Actors will be traveling across the eastern portions of North America, portraying the earliest days of Brethren in Christ World Missions at Matopo Mission in Africa. Noted author Doris Dube will be accompanying the group and will be available to

sign copies of her newest book *Zulu*, published as part of the centennial celebration.

*Celebrating*  
**100 Years**  
of Brethren in Christ  
**WORLD MISSIONS**  
1898-1998

### SCHEDULE OF PERFORMANCES

**Sunday, July 5**, 7:00 p.m.  
General Conference, Grantham  
(Messiah College), Pa.

**Wednesday, July 8**, 6:30 p.m.  
Kitchener-Waterloo (West  
Heights Church), Ontario

**Thursday, July 9**, 6:30 p.m.  
Fort Erie (Riverside Chapel -  
NCC), Ontario

**Saturday, July 11**, 7:00 p.m.  
Roxbury Camp Tabernacle, Pa.

**Sunday, July 12**, 7:00 p.m.  
Martinsburg (Roaring Spring  
Middle School), Pa.

**Tuesday, July 14**, 7:00 p.m.  
North Baltimore Mennonite  
Church, Md.

**Wednesday, July 15**, 7:00 p.m.  
Mifflintown (Cedar Grove  
Church), Pa.

**Thursday, July 16**, 7:00 p.m.  
Mechanicsburg (Messiah  
Village), Pa.

**Saturday, July 18**, 7:00 p.m.  
Lancaster (Mennonite High  
School), Pa.

**Sunday, July 19**, 6:00 p.m.  
Lancaster (Mennonite High  
School), Pa.

**Wednesday, July 22**, 2:00 p.m.  
West Milton (Memorial Holiness  
Camp), Ohio

**Friday, July 24**, 6:30 p.m.  
Massillon (Amherst Community  
Church), Ohio



# Messiah Village nears goal through anonymous gifts

Mechanicsburg, PA—An anonymous gift of \$250,000 has brought Messiah Village close to its \$1,500,000 campaign goal to support a major redesign of its nursing care facilities. Dr. Emerson L. Leshner, president, noted that a nursing care resident, in consultation with personal financial advisors, has given this—the largest gift to date in

the campaign. An additional gift of \$100,000 from a Messiah Village couple has added momentum to the “Enhancing Care, Same Compassion” campaign.

During the past six months, the volunteer-guided campaign has generated more than \$1,470,000. These funds will be added to the borrowed monies in

order to underwrite the \$3,000,000 nursing care project.

The present nursing facilities were first constructed in 1978. Current plans call for renovation and adding space in order to provide home-like neighborhoods. Construction is expected to begin in late summer.

In making the announcement, Dr. Leshner observed, “We are very grateful for this major boost in support of this campaign. These larger gifts top previous ones and will help to lower the future debt of the total project.”

## Mennonite World Conference assembly headed for Africa in 2003

by Marshall V. King, MWC writer

The 14th Assembly of Mennonite World Conference will likely take place on the continent of Africa in the year 2003. The MWC Executive Committee, meeting in Strasbourg, France, expressed a preference for the year 2003, rather than waiting until 2004, and agreed to study which country will be the host. Three churches have issued official invitations: the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia, the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe, and the Meserete Kristos Church of Ethiopia.

In the years preceding the next gathering of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ from across the globe, MWC will continue its work to facilitate communion between churches through activities that have been developed in response to the specific needs, requests, and initiatives of MWC member churches or their mission and service agencies.

Executive secretary Larry Miller, who is working from Elkhart, Ind., rather than Strasbourg until August 1998, said MWC attempts to stimulate “greater unity in our life in Jesus Christ as members of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ world community.” As part of that effort, representatives of Mennonite Central Committee and MWC are discussing how the two groups might relate more fully in the international arena on behalf of the world church. At the MWC Executive

Committee meeting, Ronald Mathies, MCC executive director, spoke to the committee members about internalization, which is about accountability and relationships as they deal with power, structure, and money.

The executive committee agreed to an exchange with MCC’s executive committee over the next three years. Representatives from each group will attend the other group’s meetings. During that time, the groups will continue to strengthen the partnership, utilizing MWC’s worldwide membership and MCC’s workers and support.

In other business, MWC decided to publish results of the Faith and Life Council meeting in Calcutta, including answers to a questionnaire given to churches worldwide about what it means to be Mennonite or Brethren in Christ today. Also, several historians will be asked to prepare a brief description of the common core of Anabaptism in the 16th century to provide context for the continuing discussions in the Council.

In a related effort, MWC is sponsoring the Global Mennonite History Project. Executive committee members expressed hope that the project will tell the story of contemporary global Anabaptism to aid in leadership training and practical discussion and that it will include stories of heroes of faith from across the world.

Work to develop the Global Anabaptist Peace and Justice Network is under-

way. National conferences and local congregations will be asked to appoint a representative to the network, which will help coordinate requests for prayer and other assistance.

The MWC Executive Committee also agreed to select ten participants for the Jerusalem Seminar, a three-week course in the Middle East for Bible teachers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The seminar, planned and sponsored by MCC, will take place in 1999.

## More sponsors needed for secondary students in Zimbabwe

Through its Global Family program, Mennonite Central Committee helps students in the Binga, Zimbabwe, area receive an education.

Recently Fremont and Sara Regier, MCC Zimbabwe country representatives, visited three secondary schools where MCC has arranged for North American sponsors to help pay for students’ school fees, books, and uniforms.

“These are very poor schools with few facilities or books,” report the Regiers. “Some classes meet outside under the trees.” Students, who come from miles around, sometimes sleep in the classrooms and cook food for themselves.

MCC needs seven additional sponsors for the Zimbabwe Global Family program. For information, in the United States, contact Kate Myers at (717) 859-1151; in Canada, contact Evelyn Peters-Rojas at (204) 261-6381.



# Brethren in Christ congregations partner with MMA

During 1997, Brethren in Christ congregations and Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) together helped meet diverse financial needs of church members. MMA contributed \$107,022.21 through its Sharing Fund and these congregations matched with \$198,585.91 during the year.

Overall, MMA's Sharing Funds distributed \$2.3 million nationally in 1997 through the Sharing Fund, and various Anabaptist congregations matched these dollars with \$3.4 million. The number of households, 4,254, helped with these matching fund programs was a significant 67 percent higher than in 1996.

Other highlights of 1997 at MMA included:

The corporate tithe was changed to allow MMA to increase its tithe potential from 10 to 30 percent annually, depending on financial results. The tithe goes into MMA's Sharing Fund and other fraternal benefits for congregations and members.

Self-employed individuals and small businesses were offered a unique option, medical savings accounts (MSAs), which help them to simultaneously cover medical expenses and save for retirement.

MMA Affinity Life Plans jumped from 229 to 1,297 insurance policies at the end of their second year. These plans offer members the option of donating up to \$5,000 as a death benefit to a church or charity.

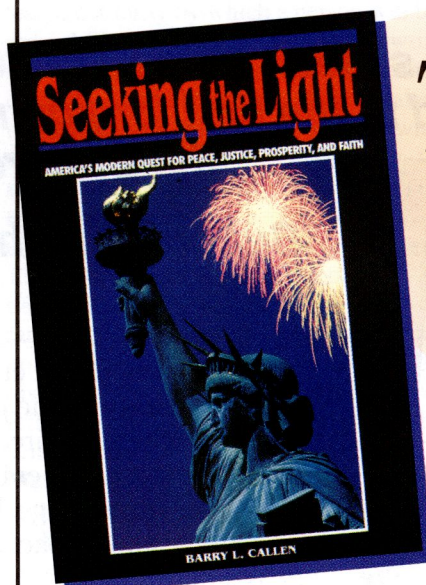
The MMA Praxis International Fund was introduced, giving Anabaptists a third mutual fund guided by Anabaptist values and faith.

MMA is a church-related organization that helps church members of Anabaptist-related denominations practice Christian stewardship. It offers stewardship solutions through its diversified insurance and financial services as well as charitable programs.

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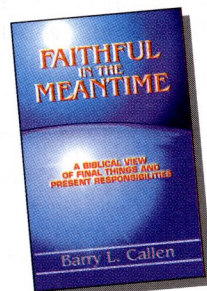
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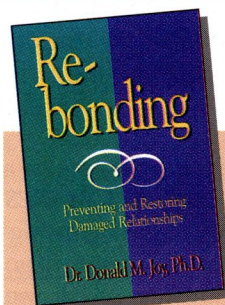
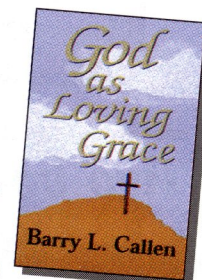
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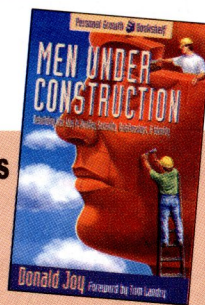
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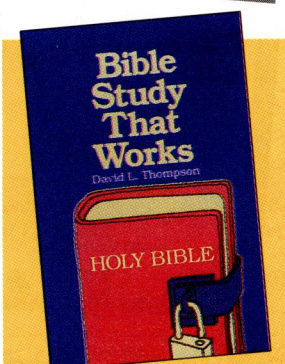


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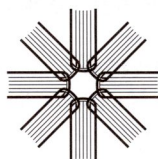
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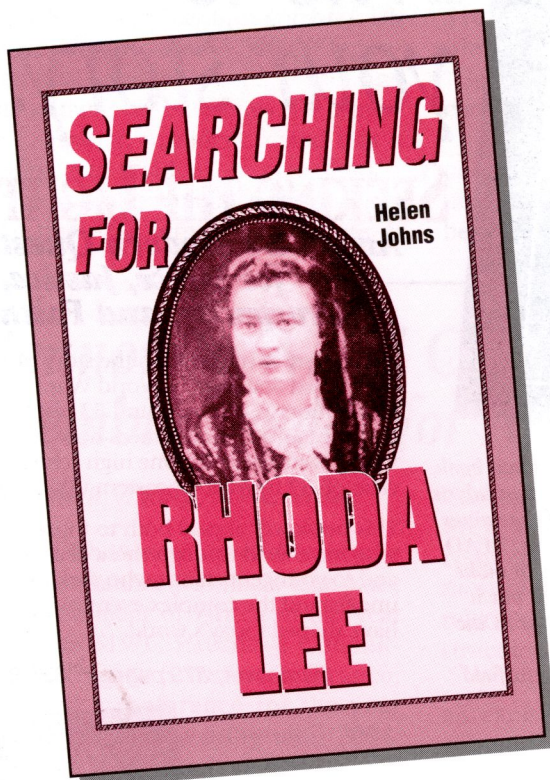
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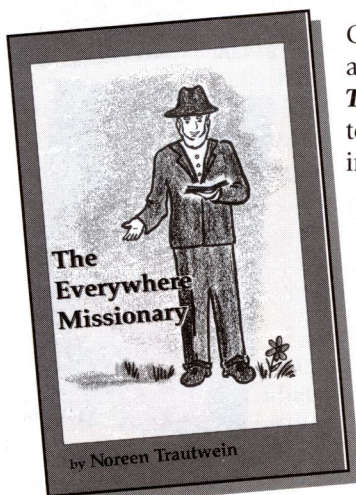
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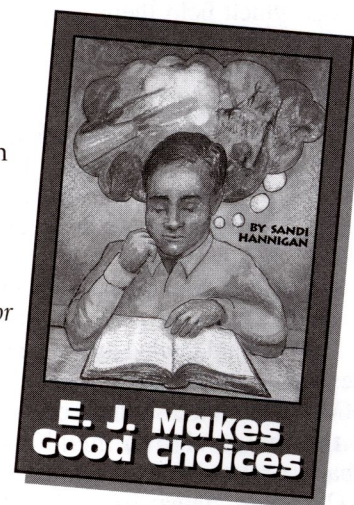
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## Opening the Word of Life

The courage to eliminate the things which tempt us.

by Ed Kessler

"Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell (Mat 18:7-9).

*Skandalon* (verb form, *skandalizo*) is an interesting word that is used in the New Testament for the idea of causing a person to fall or to be ruined. Various translations, one often finds it behind the English words, "to give offense," "stumbling block," "cause to sin," and also carries with it, in certain instances, the idea of apostasy or falling away from the faith.

The root meaning of *skandalon* involves the idea of springing forward and back, of trapping something in a snare. The word evolved to designate something that a person finds offensive, and even to mean the reason for a person's punishment (to be offensive to law or authority).

Some of the more important uses of *skandalon* in the New Testament are:

(1) References to Jesus (and the Gospel)

as offensive to non-believers, and as the test or authority by which a person will be judged (E.g., Romans 9:33, "As it is written: 'See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall (*skandalon*), and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.'"); (2) Instances of persecution or tribulation that cause a person to fall away as in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:21, "But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away (*skandalizo*)."; (3) The disciples themselves took "offense" and fell away during Jesus' suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross (Mark 14:27; Matt. 26:31). (4) False teachers caused both divisions and apostasy (*skandalon*) as they tempted others to follow or accept false doctrines (see Revelation 2:14 and the teachings of Balaam). (5) In Paul's discussion of those with "weak" and "strong" faith, he teaches that those with "strong" faith should not use their freedom in a way that causes the stumbling of the "weak" (Romans 14-15; 1 Corinthians 8, 10).

In Matthew 18, Jesus teaches that his disciples should have the courage to eliminate the things, relationships, and ideas which introduce temptation (*skandalon*) into their lives. In a strong, figurative lesson Jesus uses the analogy of cutting off one's hand or removing one's eye if one or the other is the gate through which the stumbling block or trap is introduced to us. The spiritual discipline of avoiding or removing the *skandalon* in one's life marks mature discipleship. The enemy has a way of knowing our own particular weaknesses, and he endeavors to place these stumbling blocks into our pathways.

A consideration of Jesus' lesson leads to some practical activities for the Christian. To avoid the scandals of one's faith a somber honesty is needed. Acknowledging one's vulnerabilities regarding temptation moves us to the place of power, not weakness, as we walk with Christ. It helps the Christian to pray with wisdom, asking God for grace to avoid the places, people, ideas and media which lead us into temptation. To know the tactics of the enemy, where he will attack, helps us to protect ourselves.

It is also helpful to have a few close Christian friends to whom we confess or communicate our weakness, and who can keep us accountable in our attempts to live for Christ.

Furthermore, one needs to develop and live by the philosophy that it is better to live without certain "pleasures," "things," "experiences," or "friends" which lead us away from Christ, than to live with them and go astray. God, give to your people the courage to eliminate or lop off the trappings of their world.

Finally, one loses his or her joy or victory in Christ when the stumbling blocks are not combated. One of the saddest experiences in pastoral ministry is to see people enticed time and time again back to the things which are an offense to their faith. They are not happy Christians. Depression and a sense of failure rule their lives.

In Jesus' lesson He states that "it is better...to enter eternal life" than to have the flash of pleasure that a scandal provides. That must be one of the biggest understatements of the Bible. The joy of the Lord and the rewards of Heaven are motivation enough to live without even the grandest, most exciting, most delicious snares of the world.

Ed Kessler pastors the Free Grace Brethren in Christ Church in Millersburg, Pa.

Ed Kessler pastors the Free Grace Brethren in Christ Church in Millersburg, Pa.



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Bulletins and newsletters reprinting "Pontius Puddle" must pay \$10 for each use to Joel Kauffman, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526.





# Discipleship for the **21<sup>st</sup>** Century

## **To pay or withhold taxes for war?**

by Samuel M. Brubaker

Refusal for conscience' sake to pay taxes when government engages in immoral activities is a challenge considered by an increasing number of Christians these days. For decades, some Christians who have been conscientiously opposed to war have withheld a portion of their federal income tax in order to avoid supporting activity they find morally reprehensible. More recently, the prospect of government funding for abortion has caused other Christians to also consider tax resistance as a method of avoiding personal support of a morally reprehensible activity.

Although I am personally a conscientious objector to war, and performed alternate service during the Vietnam war, I have not practiced war tax withholding. I have wished to be properly subject to the higher powers; I have wished to avoid paying even more for war as the government extracts from me not only the taxes they claim, but also the interest and penalties; I have chosen other ways to witness against war. However, our guest author's story challenges me—is God calling us to take a more difficult path for the sake of a sharper witness? And do we rightly interpret the meaning of Jesus' words

when, to elude a trap, he responded "...then give to Caesar what is Caesar's..."?

The following testimony of a war tax resister is shared to stimulate all of us to consider this issue again. The author is associate pastor of Spring Creek Church of the Brethren in Hershey, Pa., and will soon assume pastoral leadership of Washington City Church of the Brethren in D.C.

"Before I married Ron, he was a conscientious objector and had lived simply enough that he had not had to pay taxes that supported war. However, as we merged our lives and incomes into one, it was not easy to live that frugally. So we together committed to participate in what we call "diverting our tax money for peace"—or what others have called war tax resistance. Over the last twenty years, instead of including the approximately 50 percent of our Federal Income Tax that has been consistently used for building weapons and supporting the military, we have contributed that portion for peace-making endeavors and to the life-enhancing ministries of the church.

Of course, the IRS has found ways to collect that portion from us, with interest, but we have found some consolation in not giving it voluntarily.

This stance has also provided many opportunities to share our witness for the Prince of Peace in such ways as: conver-

sations with an IRS agent who just did not know how to respond to our faith perspective; annual letters to the IRS explaining our stance; periodic letters to political leaders; explanations to bank personnel and Ron's employers about why our accounts and wages are being attached and depleted; conversations with many people seeking their own way to be faithful with their tax money, as well as discussions with others who found our stance disrespectful (if not worse); journeying with the congregation I served before coming here, when they received a letter from the IRS expecting that they would pay from my salary. After study, prayer, and much discussion, their response to the IRS was that they would not be a tax collection agent against their members—and they heard no more from the IRS!

Because the IRS tends to find a way to exact money from us, usually in ways that attract as little attention as possible, we have not suffered the ridicule nor had to make the personal sacrifices that many others have experienced. However, this response of faith does put limits on what we can have financially, and we continue to bear the uncertainty, inconvenience, and sometimes fear of never knowing how the IRS will respond to our actions each year.

At times I struggle with the temptation to just take the easy way out and pay it.

Is this an effective witness? Do I hope to change the world for peace by such an action? Probably not. But it is an action that keeps me asking what I am risking and how can I be faithful in obeying God rather than human authorities. Especially in a world where materialism supported by violence is the more prevalent message we are asked to believe, I see this as one way to give witness to the truly good news and abundant life I find in Jesus Christ.

Alice Martin-Adkins

We should all find no ethical problem in supporting the campaign to have Congress establish the World Peace Tax Fund, which would legalize the diversion of war taxes to peaceful and peacemaking uses.

*Samuel Brubaker is a regular columnist for the Evangelical Visitor. He lives in Arcanum, Ohio.*

## **Focusing our Mission...**


*continued from page 30*

as healing that God provided when I was bitten by a poisonous snake, and the recovery of a lost article in India, which if not found, had the potential for very serious consequences. Every Wednesday at noon in our General Church Offices we have an opportunity for corporate prayer and rejoicing in answers to prayer.

With our human wisdom and resources are we inclined to forget, overlook, or relegate to second place the emphasis found in Scripture? Think of Abraham (Gen. 18:16-23) or Elijah (1 Kings 18:38) in the Old Testament.

The New Testament church moved forward on its knees (Acts 1:14, 24; 4:23-31; 6:4).

Every church can grow in numbers and in maturity. Every church can disciple its members, especially new believers. Every church can send out people into the harvest field—if it is prepared to pay the price of the first priority—spending time on our knees. My prayer and hope is that every Brethren in Christ congregation will move forward under God's leadership by spending time on its knees.

Prayer is the key to 250 Growing, Discipling, Sending Congregations by AD 2000. 





# Onesimus

Readers may correspond with Onesimus by writing to him in care of the *Evangelical Visitor*, P.O. Box 166, Nappanee, IN 46550. Letters to Onesimus may be published unless they are marked "Personal—Not for Publication."

Dear Paul,

Greetings from the 1998 Brethren in Christ General Conference. What a great celebration! The delegates here have been basking in the accomplishments of 100 years in Brethren in Christ World Missions. We now have missionaries in at least 17 nations around the world.

We have certainly come a long way since Rhoda Lee took the floor of that 1894 General Conference in Kansas to make her impassioned speech for the lost of the world. That faithful, brave, and outspoken woman probably never imagined what Brethren in Christ World Missions would grow up to be. I thank God for her example.

I thank God for your example too, Paul. You just couldn't seem to sit still for very long during your lifetime of serving Jesus. You were the ultimate missionary. One of the reasons I think you were successful is that you adapted so well to change in the world around you.

Our world is changing too, Paul. That means that in order for the Brethren in Christ Church to evangelize the greatest number of people possible, we may need to consider adapting our approach after a century of traditional missions. Our culture seems to be handing us at least two golden opportunities for evangelistic missions not available 100 years ago.

The first opportunity revolves around the half million international students here

in North America. They are a mission field in our backyard. The world has literally come to our doorstep "from every nation." Over half of these students come from the "10/40 Window," the world's least evangelized area. We must not miss this opportunity to share the gospel of grace with them and send them home with Jesus living in their hearts.

We are confident that reaching lost people, no matter where they are from, is God's will for the Brethren in Christ at the beginning of this next millennium.

We have some pioneers, like Mim Stern, already working in this area. But what would happen if it became a concerted effort for Brethren in Christ World Missions? We should consider sending more trained missionaries to the college campuses of North America, even if it means less missionaries sent overseas.

The second golden opportunity is also closer to home than we normally think of when we speak of "missions." North America has become predominately

pagan. In fact, just the population of the United States is now the third largest unchurched people group on earth.

A study by *Newsweek* revealed that only "19 percent of Americans are religiously committed (practicing their religion regularly)." That means that as much as 81 percent of the U.S. population probably does not have a true and personal relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ. It means they are lost, Paul.

North America is a mission field as fertile as any on the planet. The spiritual vacuum here is attracting missionaries from all over the world as they come to evangelize us! Perhaps it's time to "turn our hearts toward home" when we think of Brethren in Christ Missions.

How would that "flesh out"? It would mean that in the next decade or two the Brethren in Christ would appropriate a higher percentage of their personnel and dollars for North American missions (church planting) as well as for international student missions. It would all be seen as "missions."

This "closer to home" approach could be viewed by some as "losing ground." But in reality, it is simply "running a different play" to reach the same goal: winning the lost to Christ. We are confident that reaching lost people, no matter where they are from, is God's will for the Brethren in Christ at the beginning of this next millennium.

Thank God with me, Paul, for the Brethren in Christ missionaries who have given their lives to spreading the gospel. They have done their job well. May the Holy Spirit raise up a whole new crop of missionaries and evangelists for the needs facing the church in the century to come. And pray for the Brethren in Christ, Paul. We need to know God's direction and priorities for missions as we enter the 21st century.

A missionary to North America  
Onesimus



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# Focusing our Mission

250 Growing, Discipling,  
Sending Congregations  
by A.D. 2000



## FOCUSING OUR MISSION: PRAYER

### Key to 250 Growing, Discipling, Sending Congregations

by Harvey R. Sider

Recently, a group called Mission America initiated a gathering of over 200 leaders from nearly 60 denominations and 150 parachurch groups to focus on the "Jerusalem" of the Great Commission. Many of us will long remember a statement in the opening session which was key to our intense one and a half days together: "If we want to reach our country for Christ, we must start at the *first* place—on our knees."

Time spent together in seeking God's face through praise and prayer authenticated the challenge to "start at the *first* place—on our knees." There was a repeated call for God's people to bathe the vision of Mission America, *Celebrate Jesus 2000*, in prayer. We were constantly reminded that only with prayer can we reach every home with the Gospel by AD 2000.

The Brethren in Christ have a vision, *250 Growing, Discipling, Sending Congregations by AD 2000*. We can praise the Lord that we already have 242 churches, which is well ahead of the projected goal for 1998. Thanks to all of you who have been praying and those who have been diligently at work to accomplish our vision. We can reach and greatly exceed this vision, perhaps by 15 or more additional churches, as we "start at the *first* place—on our knees."

In this, my last "official" article before retiring after 47 of what to me have been wonderful years of ministry in the Brethren in Christ Church, the most important thing I can do is to urge each

reader, each congregation—the entire church—to a renewed sense of dependency upon God. We must give more than lip service to the words of the prophet, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 6:4). We must diligently practice Jesus' words when he urges us to seek and keep on seeking, ask and keep on asking, knock and keep on knocking.

Can you imagine what would happen if 50 percent of our prayer meeting time was spent in actually praying, earnestly seeking for revival, for reconciliation, and praying by name for the scores of our friends and neighbors who need Jesus Christ? We, our churches, and our communities would certainly be transformed through such spiritual warfare. Can you imagine the increased effectiveness of our pastors and leaders if we daily interceded that God would give each one humility, courage, strength, and faith to lead and shepherd the flock and reach out into our communities for Christ? The largest church in the world credits its growth to the thousands who gather as early as 4:00 and 5:00 a.m., as well as other times throughout the day and on weekends, in small and large groups, to focus their prayers on specific friends and neighbors who need Jesus Christ. Among the results of such a prayer ministry, two are outstanding: first, there is a constant revitalization of the church and the individual's life; and second, sinners are transformed into saints.

The year 1998 could well be called the "year of prayer" for the church in North America. In addition to a special emphasis on prayer in denominational and parachurch groups, three of the very large and significant interdenominational, continent-wide prayer events include: 40 Days of Fasting and Prayer (March 1-April 9), See You at the Pole (Sept. 16), and the Interdenominational Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (Nov. 15). Such a prayer force makes a huge difference in the lives of those who par-

ticipate. It definitely impacts those for whom we pray.

I am most grateful and encouraged by the Brethren in Christ who began 1998 with fasting and prayer. New Joy, a church plant only three years old, had a concert of prayer the first Sunday evening of the year. Also, their bulletins carried an invitation to the "rewarding experience of fasting and prayer." Is it any wonder this congregation has grown from zero to nearly 250 in such a short time? Other long-established churches participated in the one week of fasting and prayer. New Guilford, for example, conducted a night of prayer, and then on Thursday evening they instituted a 24-hour prayer chain, using a combination of the concerns and information provided by the general church offices and those arising out of their own congregation. A leading and busy layman, reviewing with me the strong, steady growth in his church, confessed with great emotion, "Prayer is where it all begins." No wonder God is honoring that man and congregation.

The church needs strong preaching and pastoral care. Great organization, vision, focus, and all-member involvement are essential, but the first priority always has been and always will remain prayer. Jesus, our master model, practiced this principle, "Jesus awoke long before daybreak and went out alone into the wilderness to pray." (Mark 1:35). Other similar passages underscore Jesus' dependence on prayer.

I attribute some of the most outstanding memories of my life to prayer, such

*continued on page 28*

Harvey R. Sider is completing his term as Moderator of the Brethren in Christ Church.





# EDITORIAL

*In researching material for "E.V. Timelines" this month, I came across the editorial for July 1988. Its emphasis on a solution for stress levels was just as appropriate for the days leading up to General Conference 1998 as a decade ago.*

## ***The parable of page 1231/1232***

### **FROM THE EDITOR:**

Considerably more space has been given in this issue to articles with an overseas flavor, which is appropriate, since this year is the centennial celebration of Brethren in Christ World Missions. Some of the stories come from areas where Brethren in Christ missionaries have been working for decades, such as Japan and Nicaragua. Others focus on relatively new ministries, such as Jay Smith's encounters with Muslims in London. The lead article reports a Pennsylvania couple who are involved in using the **Jesus** film in evangelism around the world.

A second, mini-theme develops around the issue of stress (personal and pastoral). And we explore the Internet, giving one solution to the problem of having children exposed to pornography on their computer screens.

***In the August issue—coverage of the 1998 General Conference in words and photos.***

I have a New International Study Bible which has seen better days. It has been used hard, both in the work of the editorial department (checking every biblical reference in books and articles I edit) as well as in much of my own personal Bible study.

Since it is a sample copy of the Thompson Chain Reference NIV (sent free to editors for review purposes), the Bible does not have a durable, hard cover. The binding is starting to crack at the spine, so that the Bible is beginning to break into two separate parts. No, it is not neatly separating into the Old and New Testaments; the break is occurring in the book of Hebrews.

Several weeks ago, while reading in Hebrews, I realized that one page can't make up its mind which section to join. At the point where page 1231/1232 is bound into the Bible, the page itself is starting to tear. Part of the page's edge is tightly bound to chapter 10 and the front two-thirds of the Bible, while the rest is firmly attached to chapter 13 and the last third of the book. Quite literally, chapter 11 (the "faith chapter") and chapter 12 (the call to "run the race") are all that is holding the book together.

Noticing this on a particularly stressful day, I thought, "this is a parable of my life right now." You, too, probably have had times of stress and strain like this. There are days when it seems that all that holds us together is faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the host of witnesses recorded in Hebrews 11, coupled with the determination to run the race our Lord sets before us. The words of the writer of Hebrews spoke clearly: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (12:2-3).

Thinking about this—and jotting it down for future reference—helped to significantly lower the stress level of that day, and the days to follow. I trust that when those days of strain come in your life, you too will experience the encouragement of knowing that faith in God and commitment to his work will "hold the book together."

I had to think of that single page holding my study Bible together as I started to prepare this July issue. We could develop a long list of factors which create and enhance the sense of community which delegates experience at General Conference. But none are more fundamental, or long-lasting, than our common faith in Jesus Christ and the call to "run the race"...which God has set before the church.

And, although this year's agenda does not appear to contain material that is potentially divisive, there are items...which probably will engender lively discussion and at least some disagreement. In the unlikely event that our debate gets "hot and heavy," threatening to break that which binds us together, let's remember the parable of page 1231-1232. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us...[fixing] our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (12:1-2).

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# The cost of reaching the lost

by Greg Deardorff

"Oh, man! Who spit out their chewing gum on the sidewalk right outside the front door of the church?" Those were my first thoughts when I observed this improperly placed piece of ABC gum (Already-Been-Chewed). I immediately realized there would be some "cost" for reaching out to our community with the news of Jesus.

Every parent knows how things changed around the home when new children came into the family. Not only did schedules change, but our understanding of what was acceptable changed, too! It soon became acceptable for the new member of the family to spit up on the floor. That doesn't mean we liked the baby spitting up on the floor. That's just what babies do. So we accepted it, because we loved our new child. New members in a biological family change family dynamics.

New members in the church family change church dynamics, too. Keeping a nice church building is important, but we are not here for the purpose of keeping a nice church building. We are here to reach people for Jesus Christ. Just as parents and grandparents need to adapt to changes in family life, so too the church family needs to adapt to changes in church family life.

There are times when the change that results with new members in the family is not always comfortable. Most families have experienced at least one person marry into the family that seemed so different "than us." But we accepted them and began to appreciate them for who they are.

So too in the church family, there may be times when the change that results with new people is not always comfortable. But nowhere in the Bible does it say we are called to be comfortable. We are called to be obedient to the command of Jesus to "go and make disciples."

So if you see a piece of chewing gum around the church where it shouldn't be, may God help you to realize that chewing gum represents a young member of the church family. May God help us to be accepting of the changes that come as we do what the church must do...reach lost people for Jesus.

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*Greg Deardorff pastors the Hershey (Pa.) congregation.*

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